

Get serious
about recycling

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Red head curator to retire



Victoria Lu has shaped Chinese contemporary art during her 32 years as a curator. But now she says it's time to pass the torch. This year's Venice Biennale, her final exhibition, will harness and highlight the creative energy of Asia's contemporary art scene.

Read more on Pages 12-13

Page 15 Surreal shots

The fad that began with this Japanese woman has spread to China! Now everyone is trying levitation photography.



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Sounds of the harbor

Houhai is launching a fleet of oar-driven boats to recreate scenes of its historic role in the grain trade.

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A model's dream

Can African models succeed on China's runways?



Hospitals deny HIV/AIDS patients access to treatment

By Han Manman

Ignorant doctors are denying treatment to patients with HIV/AIDS and preventing them from getting necessary care at hospitals, a new study released Tuesday by the United Nations' International Labor Organization (ILO) found.

Conducted by China's National Center for STD and AIDS Prevention and Control, the report said that HIV/AIDS patients encountered widespread difficulties in receiving medical services despite national regulations that clearly define their medical rights and forbid discrimination.

HIV/AIDS became a major problem in China in the 1990s, when hundreds of thousands of impoverished farmers in rural Henan Province contracted the disease during a botched blood-selling scheme. Today the virus is spread primarily through sexual contact.

A recent report by the Minis-

try of Health showed the annual death toll from AIDS on the mainland is surging. The disease has topped the list of the mainland's most dangerous epidemic diseases for the past three years.

Government records show that 7,743 people died from AIDS in 2010, and 15,982 new AIDS patients were reported that year, up by 16.79 percent and 19.73 percent over 2009 respectively.

The ILO report said denial of surgery was one of the most pressing issues facing HIV-infected persons, who were also denied treatment for simpler procedures such as hemorrhoid removal and stitches.

At the news conference to unveil the report Tuesday, an HIV-positive patient who declined to be named said he was repeatedly denied medical care for a back problem at hospitals in both Tianjin and Beijing.

One doctor told him that surgery would be impossible because

he would infect others during the procedure, the patient said.

"China's old policy that persons with HIV/AIDS should only be treated in designated hospitals is one of the root causes of the ongoing discrimination," said Zhang Ke, deputy director of the infectious disease department of the Beijing You An Hospital. Zhang has treated HIV/AIDS patients for more than 10 years.

"Those designated hospitals have been a major obstacle that prevents people with HIV from receiving proper and timely medical treatment," Zhang said.

Many hospitals use the continued existence of these designated hospitals as an excuse to refuse HIV/AIDS patients for routine medical services.

He said the poor treatment comes from the doctors' own ignorance of the disease.

Zhang said many doctors spe-

cialize too much in their own fields and have little knowledge about diseases such as HIV/AIDS. They mistakenly think those patients are the sole responsibility of specialized hospitals.

Some doctors also fear being exposed to the virus, he said.

Zhang called on the government to educate medical professionals about how the disease can be spread and how to safely treat HIV/AIDS patients. He also suggested the shuttering of designated HIV/AIDS hospitals.

The report said China has made progress in combating the disease since it targeted healthcare as an area requiring stronger policy.

It recommended improving relevant policies, promoting awareness of the medical rights of the ill and strengthening the use of universal precautionary measures that would prevent contraction of the disease.

High-tech Expo focuses on 'Smart Beijing'

By Chu Meng

Smart Beijing, an exhibition of technological achievements, is one of the top exhibits at the 14th China Beijing International High-tech Expo, which opened Wednesday at China International Exhibition Center.

The themed exhibition zone will review the city's high-tech achievements of the past decade and display an urban development plan that takes advantage of digital technology, corporate networking and integrated government services.

The display demonstrates new innovations in smart traffic, parking wizards, smart family, smart healthcare and mobile payments.

The enterprise exhibition zone gathers the Top 10 Beijing-based enterprises, including the telecom tycoons China Mobile, China Telecom and China Unicom, and Gehua CATV, to display the innovative applications of mobile Internet, cloud computing and e-commerce.

Zhongguancun Science Park is one of the highlights.

The area is China's biggest and most famous high-tech hub and the incubator of Top 10 technology companies, including Lenovo Group, Baidu and Founder Group. It is also the China headquarters of world-renowned technology corporations such as Google, Microsoft, Intel, Oracle and Motorola.

Because of marketing and labor allocation concerns, many companies have moved their Asian research and development centers to Zhongguancun during the past five years.

Yang Jianhua, deputy director of the administrative committee of Zhongguancun Science Park, said the development can be attributed to the area's "rich accesses to top Chinese research and intelligence resources. Geographically, it is close to a group of top universities, national academies and corporate research centers."

Lenovo Group, the biggest company in Zhongguancun, developed from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Founder Group, another major technology conglomerate, grew out of Peking University.

The science park has also enjoyed a stream of supportive government policies since 1988, granting it tax exemptions and research subsidies. The government support makes it one of the most attractive places for returning students to establish a business back in China.

But greater efforts are still needed, he said.

"We have always heard people refer to us as 'China's Silicon Valley,' but there is still a wide gap and we have seen our weaknesses," he said.

Zhongguancun and Silicon Valley have radically different management styles, which are in many ways a reflection of the political systems of their respective governments. Zhongguancun also lags behind Silicon Valley in terms of scale.

"When people say Silicon Valley, they think of Google and Cisco. It is these companies that drive the development of the world's information technology industry," he said. "Zhongguancun income levels have increased 26 percent over the past 10 years, but there is still a long way to go before we can catch up."

Foreign language struck from kindergarten curriculum



Many educators suggest students should not begin bilingual training before the age of six.

CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

Following a debate about the need for foreign language classes in kindergarten, the municipal government recent struck down the requirement in a revised draft passed this week.

"International Language Construction Guideline in the Capital (2011-2015)," the document, previously stated that "kindergartens in Beijing must open foreign language classes within the next five years." Had it passed, it would have effectively made all of Beijing's kindergartens bilingual.

Educators and parents said that students should not begin bilingual education at the ages of 4, 5 and 6, noting it would increase the already heavy burden placed on young students.

But city education officials say that striking out the requirement

only makes it optional. They are still advocating that schools open bilingual courses.

"At this point, the discussion is about how to design and implement these classes, not whether to have them at all," said Li Shenli, an official with the municipal educational committee. "We need to find a better way to create a friendly and encouraging atmosphere for kids [to learn foreign languages]."

In the meantime, the guidelines require elementary and high schools in the capital to step up their foreign language education. Schools may begin hiring more foreign language teachers during the next five years.

Another reason for the cancellation was a shortage of qualified foreign language instructors at the kindergarten level, the committee said.

Most of the courses offered by downtown kindergartens only give students a chance to hear exotic languages, rather than actually study them. Some use this as a chance to charge extra tuition fees, a practice on which authorities are cracking down.

"It all depends on teaching ability," said Zhou Chuanfu, president of the Second Kindergarten in Chongwen District.

Zhou said the purpose of foreign language education is to incubate the interests of the kids toward foreign languages rather than to have them go through rote memorization of words and phrases.

Some of the teachers, parents and adults believe learning foreign languages at an early age is best because children can more rapidly absorb words and phrases.

English is becoming more and

more important in Beijing and throughout country. By 2015, English tests are expected to be required of all young people entering the service industry.

The municipal government requires that 90 percent of all taxi drivers and public transportation officials must have a grasp of 100 to 300 practical English phrases, all young public servants must understand and speak 1,000 phrases and 80 percent of the police under the age of 40 must pass the oral portion of Beijing English Test (BET).

But many believe these quantitative tests are pointless for the employed population.

"It all depends on your interest and ability," said taxi driver Luo Su. But he said that as Beijing is becoming more international, it is inconvenient that he can't communicate with many foreign passengers.

Micro-charity explosion leaves potential for abuse

By Chu Meng

Hongban Primary School is located deep in the rugged mountains. Most students make an arduous two-hour trek to and from school each day. Since the school did not provide lunch and the trip home was too long, three fourths of the students simply didn't eat during the school day.

That was in the past. Today, more than 200 students at Hongban Primary School in Qianxi County, Quizhou Province, enjoy a hot lunch. Their meal is the result of a successful private donation drive, Free Lunch, organized by 500 Chinese reporters using several microblogs.

Online media sources such as microblogs and social networks are booming, and many people are using them as launch pads for private charity drives. In many ways, the charities' success is a backlash against national organizations that are widely perceived as lumbering.

But these new charity channels lack the oversight needed to prevent corruption, said Li Weiyang, director of the Corporate Social Responsibility Research Center

under the Chinese Academy of Social Science.

Free Lunch was made possible using funds from Micro Plan Charity, a new group headed by Liang Shuxin, COO of the popular BBS Tianya.com. He sold virtual lunches priced at 5 yuan on Taobao.com and began keeping a charity journal on Sina Weibo.

"Liang's project is a typical example of micro-charity, a new form of charity that makes it easier for ordinary people to launch a private drive. The Internet makes this trivial whereas traditional charities require complicated application procedures and approval by a national charity foundation," Li said.

He said micro-charity is becoming popular with young middle-class workers, who raise money online rather than donating to the China Red Cross Fund, for example.

"Online charity information can be disseminated both rapidly and widely. We hear about it directly from the people who are facing difficulties. I can even communicate with them directly, learning what happened and what

kind of help they need," said Wang Jianhui, a 32-year-old Beijinger. "I like that micro-charities are convenient and let me feel involved."

Liang was not the first to engage in micro-charity.

Gigi Leung Wing-Kei, a pop star in Hong Kong, previously posted a fundraising call on her birthday, saying she would donate 1 yuan to the Hong Kong Committee of UNICEF for every time netizens forwarded her post. Within three days, her message was forwarded 75,000 times; in the end, she donated 80,000 yuan.

Zhang Yunzhi, a farmer from Shangdong Province whose son needs surgery, also successfully rose more than 100,000 yuan in two weeks using his microblog.

"Before learning about microblogs, I had tried to open a donation account with several national children's charities. It was either too hard to meet the registration requirements, or they never actually paid out," Zhang told Xinhua News Agency last weekend.

"But one thing that worried me is that no one investigated the authenticity of my experience.

It feels like anyone could raise money if they just made up a story," he said.

Micro-charity, when widely participated in, can have a big impact. But there are no specific laws governing the creation of micro-charities by individuals, said Zheng Yuanchang, an official overseeing charity work for the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

"Finding a way to regulate micro-charity will be difficult. Individuals are not allowed to raise money from the general public, so micro-charity can only be seen as mutual help between neighbors," Zheng said.

"However, the difference lies in the huge influence of the Internet. It's like our hypothetical neighbor is shouting through a megaphone. That's why we need some way to regulate this rapidly developing model," he said.

Even national charity laws are lacking: only Jiangsu and Hunan provinces have passed local regulations to fill in the void. Since 2010, the two provinces have forbid unauthorized individuals or organizations to raise any funds from the public.

Divorce 'ceremonies' available in Hebei

Does the termination of a marriage deserve its own ceremony?

Yes, according to If Love, a company specializing in marriage, divorce and psychological services. It is currently promoting "divorce ceremonies" on its website, haohehaosan.net

The *Hebei Youth Daily* reported on Tuesday that If Love began offering "divorce ceremonies" last week in Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei Province. It is believed to be the first agency to offer such services in China.

"A ceremony is necessary for both weddings and divorces, which is an elegant approach for love," If Love said on its website.

Shu Qing, one of the company's five founders, told Xinhua on Wednesday that modern society's high divorce rate is a sign that some people will want to bid farewell to their unhappy marriages through formal ceremonies.

"For those couples who really can't reconcile, a divorce ceremony can be a rational way to avoid hurting each other," said Shu, a 29-year-old married mother.

The newspaper reported that 98,478 couples split up last year in Hebei Province, among the most in the country.

"Our company endeavors to provide estranged couples a sense of closure and peace through a ceremony that will allow them to let go of their negative feelings," Shu said.

At the moment, the divorce ceremony is partially free: while there have been many inquiries, no couples have signed up for service, Shu said.

Tian Xiumei, a psychologist at Hebei Normal University, called the concept a "worthy attempt," and said a ceremony with special warmth could help the husband and wife understand each other's desires to break up.

Tian's view echoes the sentiment of American humorist Helen Rowland, who wrote, "When two people decide to get a divorce, it isn't a sign they don't understand each other, but a sign that they have at last begun to."

Feng Xiaowen, a 28-year young man who divorced last year, said he was skeptical of divorce ceremonies, noting their potential to make troubled couples recall the good times and postpone the ending of an unhappy marriage.

"The pain might be prolonged," Feng said.

Another netizen posting under the handle "yunzhuiyue" said the ceremonies are laudable.

"To have the courage to go through a divorce ceremony proves those involved can directly face reality," he said.

Opinions vary, but Shu and her company expect an actual divorce ceremony to be held soon.

"We will promote the ceremony as a way for divorced couples to show respect to each other, gain relief and then begin their new lives," Shu said.

(Xinhua)

DUI convictions boost demand for designated drivers

By Yao Weijie

Since May 1, driving while under the influence of alcohol has carried a criminal charge.

It didn't take long before police nabbed their first driver under the new law.

Gao Xiaosong, the 42-year-old pop star, was arrested shortly after the new law took effect. As part of his punishment, Gao will be banned from operating a motor vehicle for the next five years, jailed for six months and fined 4,000 yuan.

The shock of the celebrity's punishment has helped stimulate a market for designated drivers nationwide.

"Our business saw a slight increase after the government passed its revised regulations on drunk driving," said He Jin, the legal representative of Benaonda Automobile Driving Service, Beijing's first designated driving service.

In the past, Benaonda used to chauffeur between 130 and 150 intoxicated persons per night: since Gao's conviction, the average has risen to 167.

Beijing had 4.7 million registered motor vehicles by the end of 2010, and the city needs an estimated 3,000 designated drivers each day.

But He said there are only 20 companies – hotels and private drivers excluded – providing designated driving services. They can handle a volume of 1,000 clients per day.

It's the small companies that



Local drivers remain ill informed about the use of designated driving services.

CFP Photo

play the main role in the designated driving market – but they are struggling to survive.

An employee of Lijunpingan Automobile Driving Service said his business averages 10 calls a day, and things have not improved since the government changed its regulations. At companies like Benaonda, the main clients come from state-owned enterprises, foreign companies and banks.

"It will take a long time for people to change their thinking,

China treats cars as luxury goods, and letting other people use such expensive things is seen as unacceptable," he said. "Moreover, with no laws to regulate who can run a designated driving service, many people question the safety of our services."

"Who is responsible when a designated driver ends up lost? What if an accident occurs due to a car problem? How should drivers be approved to work as chauffeurs? Resolving these questions is why the government needs

to get involved," said Li Sheng, an assistant professor at Nankai University School of Law.

"The city's government should require designated driver services to be registered in some way that puts them under the supervision of traffic authorities," He said.

But He remained optimistic that the new punishments for drunk driving would eventually raise awareness of the risks people pose to themselves and others when they drive home after a night of hard drinking.



Weibo is here to help choose a name

@中国ChinaOpen: The whole world will choose the name of the China Open's New Stadium Court

The Olympic Village's newest landmark, destined to be treasured in the hearts of all tennis fans -- the China Open's New Stadium Court will be formally unveiled during the National Day holiday!

Please cast a vote for the name of the China Open's New Stadium Court!

When: May 16 midnight to May 21 midnight

How: Logon to the official China Open Weibo at weibo.com/chinaopen to vote now

For prizes and more information please visit www.chinaopen.com.cn, or call the China Open hotline at 400-707-6666

Vote now to qualify for a chance to receive pre-sale tickets for the 2011 China Open, purchase buy one get one free tickets, and receive the chance to attend the official naming ceremony and receive VIP Skybox tickets



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Is China still a threat?

US expert says American fear of China is nonsense

Will China ever become a threat to the US? Clyde Prestowitz, head of the US Economic Strategy Institute, published a paper last Tuesday in Foreign Policy Journal that criticized the question itself.



Experts believe visiting China will dispel many myths about the country.

IC Photo

"Here's the problem with the conventional American wisdom on China – it is nonsense. Honestly, it doesn't compute even within the terms of its own logic, much less those of the real world," Prestowitz wrote.

He cited examples from American newspapers to show that when it comes to China, Americans are willing to speak out of both sides of their mouths.

On May 9, the *New York Times* reported that "China has waged its harshest crackdown on liberal speech in years," and that 60 activities organized by the US Embassy in Beijing have been canceled because of interference by Chinese authorities.

Yet recent US trade statistics show

a \$250 billion trade deficit with China, which is on the rise once again. Prestowitz cited a *Washington Post* editorial on May 9 on the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue that complained that China is restricting US companies from investing in China.

"Beijing has increasingly used government procurement rules, technical standards and tax laws to force foreign companies to transfer their technology to state-owned Chinese firms in return for access to the Chinese market," the *Washington Post* editorialized.

The editorial urged the US administration to "push back" on this, but also warned that Washington should do nothing

to ban job-creating Chinese investment in the US."

Similarly, the *New York Times* editorial urged the administration to respond "firmly" to China but cautioned that nothing should be done that might precipitate protectionism.

Prestowitz tried to figure out what to make of this double-speak: if China is becoming more harshly repressive, why do the *Times* and the *Post* insist that the Obama administration try to make it easier for US companies to invest there? Wouldn't such investment only prove to the Chinese that Americans don't care about "repression" as long as their companies can put a few more factories in China?

(By Li Zhixin)

Local expert says

Self-contradiction normal in US policy

By Li Zhixin

The contradictory view on China is manifested in the dual characteristics of US policy on China.

Since 2005, American think tanks regularly held large-scale seminars to discuss the impact of China's rising.

American foreign policy is based on compromise – bending to interest groups and factions – so for better or worse, scholars, congressmen and the media have been influencing US policy on China for a long time.

There are several theories – some competing – on China's rise. Think tanks have considered China a threat, have said the country will break down, have said China's rise presents opportunities, have even admitted they know nothing at all.

The view that China will rise peace-

fully without challenging the US is shared among academic and political circles.

Those who think China will challenge the US are usually conservatives. Despite holding a minority view, their influence is considerable.

The majority of people, however, believe that the future is uncertain. They feel the US promotes positive relations with China, perhaps in order to contain it – to keep it from upsetting the current international order.

In the end, the Sino-US relationship is complicated. US policy on China is hot and cold. Dueling strategies of confrontation and cooperation are employed by both sides.

In recent years, some new problems have emerged between the two countries: the impact of China's cheap goods, its

military modernization, rising strategic influence in the Asia Pacific, search for energy in sensitive regions and use of economic strength to influence America's allies – just to name a few.

There is no historical precedence to deal with these issues, so new conflicts are inevitable. The key lies in how the US reacts to these problems.

The US government knows if it adopts a tough policy on China, the consequences could be severe. In the long-term future, the administration will have no choice but continually contradict itself in its dealings with China – that is, to both cooperate and compel.

– Niu Xinchun,
professor at the
China Institute of Contemporary
International Relations

Weekly highlights

Melon explodes after chemical overdoses

(AP) – Watermelons have been bursting by the score in eastern China after farmers gave them overdoses of growth chemicals during wet weather, creating what media called fields of "landmines."

About 20 farmers around Danyang, Jiangsu Province were affected, losing up to 45 hectares of melons, China Central Television (CCTV) said in an investigative report.

Prices over the past year prompted many farmers to jump into the watermelon market. All of those with exploding melons apparently were first-time users of the growth accelerator forchlorfenuron, though it has been widely available for some time, CCTV said.

Wang Liangu, a professor with the College of Horticulture at Nanjing Agricultural University, who has been to Danyang since the problems began, said that forchlorfenuron is safe and effective when used properly.

He said the drug had been used too late into the season, and that recent heavy rains also raised the risk of the fruits cracking open. But he said the variety of melons also played a role.

World's oldest panda, 34, dies

(AFP) – Ming Ming, the world's oldest panda, has died of old age. She was 34.

Ming Ming was rescued in Pingwu County in Sichuan Province in 1977 and had resided in Xiangjiang Wild Animal World, a safari park in southern Guangdong Province, since 1998.

She had lived much longer than most pandas. Wild pandas normally only live for 15 years and those in captivity live for 22 years on average, the report said.

The China Panda Protection Center in Sichuan confirmed in a statement that Ming Ming died on May 7, but the death was only reported by media on Tuesday.

Blood was found in Ming Ming's urine on May 2, and medical experts determined her kidneys had failed due to old age, the report said.

One-dog policy takes effect in Shanghai

(AFP) – Shanghai dog owners rushed to license their pets over the weekend as the city imposed a one-dog policy in response to the growing popularity of man's best friend.

Hundreds of citizens micro-chipped and vaccinated their pets as a new law took effect last Sunday limiting households to a single canine in an effort to curb rampant barking, unscooped feces and the growing risk of dog attacks.

To encourage more pet owners to license their dogs, the government of the commercial metropolis slashed the cost of permits in the city center to 500 yuan from the previous 2,000 yuan, *Shanghai Daily* reported.

Residents who owned two or more licensed dogs before last Sunday will be allowed to keep them but must maintain each dog's permit, state media reported.

The city's human population was more than 19 million in 2009, according to the government.

Many dog owners postponed obtaining new licenses until the cheaper rate took effect, causing a spike in traffic at animal vaccination centers, *Shanghai Daily* reported.

Top brands fail quality test

Many Chinese consumers favor foreign brands over domestic equivalents due to fashionable designs, international appeal and perceived higher quality. But an investigative report by *China Daily* has found some foreign brands fall short of expectations.



Customers pass a store of Zara, another brand name that failed the recent quality inspection.
Sha Lang/CFP Photo

“Many people still believe the quality of foreign brands is almost certainly better than domestic brands.”

In the latest quality control tests on garments sold in Beijing, several well-known brands were declared substandard. Six were international brands, 14 were Chinese.

Clothes sold by Zara, from Spain, failed in three categories, the most of any brand tested. It was also the only brand that has failed three successive quality tests.

The Beijing Consumer Association (BCA), which released the results on April 10, sampled 57 pairs of leisure trousers from 57 domestic and international brands. Thirty-seven passed tests in all 13 of the association's categories. Tests covered such characteristics as fiber content, color retention and fabric alkalinity.

The fabric in a pair of Zara trousers made in Morocco did not match the contents declared on the label that said it was 75 percent cotton, 20 percent wool and 5 percent terylene, a type of polyester. The fabric tested at 68 percent cotton, 10 percent wool and 12 percent unknown contents.

Zara is owned by Inditex, a group of 100-plus companies that calls itself one of the world's largest clothing retailers. It reported annual profits that were up nearly one-third last fiscal year from the year before, according to a report last month in *The Independent* newspaper in the UK.

“What upset us the most is not that Zara's products have been continuously failing tests, it is their silence about the quality issue found in China,” said Dong Qing, vice president of BCA. “I don't think they carry such an arrogant attitude elsewhere. Their attitude really doesn't match their international image.”

Zara's down coats failed BCA's quality tests in 2009 and 2010; their actual down content was lower (by 9.1 and 18.5 percent, respectively) than what the labels said.

After BCA published these findings, Zara did not contact the association and BCA is unaware of any action the company took in response.

“If those products are sold worldwide, then they are cheating global consumers,” Dong said. “We hope consumer associations or groups are aware of that.”

Zara opened 75 stores in China last year and plans to open 120 more this year. That will put Zara in 42 Chinese cities, up from 30 in 2010.

Dong blamed fast expansion as the primary reason for Zara's quality problems. “Adding a little bit less cotton and down in their garments could help the company save a lot, and consumers wouldn't notice.”

Emergency meeting

Another well-known foreign brand that was rated substandard is US-based Hush Puppies. The company sent a written statement to BCA immediately after the report cited labeling that did not match fabric content, requesting a re-test. Hush Puppies said there was no content other than cotton in the casual trousers sampled.

“The company held an emergency meeting after the test result was published and took the issue very seriously,” Hush Puppies said in its response to BCA.

The association reported the sample results to Beijing Administration for Industry and Commerce, which plans to fine Zara about 780,000 yuan (\$119,421) for poor quality control. The final amount is still under discussion, BCA said.

“We will continue to monitor Zara's product quality,” Dong said. “If they continue to sell substandard garments, we might have to ask them to leave Beijing. Foreign brands need to respect Chinese regulations and consumers.”

First response

The fashion retailer said that the pair of inspected trousers had less cotton content than labeled. It was the company's first official response to questions of quality in China.

“Our quality teams are analyzing the garment to figure out exactly how the problem occurred,” said Ray Hsu, who is listed on the Zara website as a media contact person in China. “Our standards are very high, as we must comply with the most demanding laws worldwide in all our more than 800 million units' production,” she said by email.

She did not answer a question about whether the inspected trousers were sold worldwide or only on the Chinese market.

In early 2007, Shanghai authorities exposed questionable clothing quality in nearly a dozen top luxury brands, including Chanel, Armani, Christian Dior and Burberry. Samples from Zara were also declared substandard.

Some consumers are not bothered by that.

“I just love Zara's style, which domestic brands just cannot beat. I don't really care about its fabric content, which I couldn't tell anyway,” university student Huang Shuang, 21, said while browsing a Zara

store in Xidan commercial district during the weekend.

Dong from BCA said Chinese consumers are obsessed with foreign brands. “Many people still believe the quality of foreign brands is almost certainly better than domestic brands,” he said. “Actually, some Chinese brands care more about product quality than those well-known brands because they can't lure consumers to buy their products by brand name alone.”

Some don't bother

“The number of complaints about foreign-brand products has been on the rise in recent years, especially among clothing and electronic products,” said Zhang Lerong, chief editor of the complaint channel at online.sh.cn.

“When we help complainants solve their problems, we often feel the global companies are reluctant to be contacted by the media.”

Wang Fengchang, CEO of the legal website Laweach and a Beijing-based expert in consumers' rights protection, said he has seen few large-scale complaints related to clothes, but it is not because the industry enjoys high quality standards.

“With that market competition growing fierce, many manufacturers have turned to price wars. In order to reduce production costs, they occasionally use cheap and low-quality materials,” Wang said. “We have received scattered complaints about clothes, but they are more about obvious flaws, such as ragged appearances and faded colors.”

(Agencies)

Baidu begins new legal music search

By Huang Daoheng

Top search engine Baidu said it is preparing to launch a new music service that will offer “free, but copyrighted music,” in an attempt to address long-standing accusations that it is fostering piracy.

The new service, Baidu Ting, will be a platform where users can download legal music and listen online. It provides social-networking functions like shared online libraries and song recommendations.

A Baidu engineer surnamed Ma said the development team has been working on Baidu Ting for several months. Tests are expected to begin this month.

Unlike Baidu's old MP3 search, the songs in Ting are provided legally. “If everything goes right, [the new service] will be officially launched next week,” he said.

Baidu Ting is currently only open to invited users. Baidu said it will open the service to more users depending on feedback.

Ma said the company is no longer updating its MP3 search channel, but it is still unknown whether Baidu Ting will eventually replace the company's MP3 search.

Analysts said Baidu's move is a response to criticism over copyright infringement. “The copyright problem has become Baidu's Achilles' heel,” said Erin Huang, an analyst with Roland Berger in Beijing.

Most recently, more than 50 writers signed a letter accusing Baidu of stealing their works by offering them for free on Baidu Wenku, its e-text search. The company apologized and promised to delete infringing works.

A US report released earlier this year named Baidu as a notorious market for offering links to pirated songs.

The criticisms were seen as a dangerous signal that could affect Baidu's share prices in the near term, Huang said. “I think investors in the US will react to this.”

Baidu share price rose 50 percent this year, compared to the Nasdaq average of around 6 percent.

The company owes much of its success on the mainland to its MP3 search service, Huang said, adding that it is the reason why Baidu is looking for a legal way to continue its music business.

“Baidu Ting is a start and will help the company improve its reputation,” she said.

But Huang remained guarded about whether the new service will match the success of Baidu MP3.

Baidu is not the first search engine to launch a legal free music service. Google tried something similar before it abandoned the China market. A rival site funded by the US, Top100.cn, already provides free songs.

Huang said Baidu Ting's success will depend on how quickly it can expand its music library and perfect its social-networking functions.

Dispute over drunk driving penalty

By Huang Daohen

In the face of law, everyone should be equal. But what if someone is truly sorry for what he has done? Should the law exercise leniency?

On Tuesday, musician Gao Xiaosong was sentenced to six months in jail for driving drunk. On May 13, *Beijing Today* reported that the 42-year-old singer crashed his car into three others at a stoplight in Chaoyang District.

In court on Tuesday, Gao made no excuses. "I have nothing to say in my defense, only that I have regret," he told a packed courtroom.

"This is no accident. It's the result of my arrogance and ignorance," he said. "I give my apologies to society and my family. This incident shows my irresponsibility for life. I'm willing to volunteer to advocate against drunk driving."

Gao's trial became a bellwether for a newly implemented criminal law that considers drunk driving a criminal offense. Under current rules, all who drive drunk will be sentenced to jail, even if they haven't caused harm.

The public isn't happy about the law, however.

Zhang Jun, vice president of the Supreme People's Court, fueled the discussion when he suggested earlier this month that not all drunken drivers should be held criminally responsible. "After all, not all drunk driving is that harmful," he said.

An online survey by QQ revealed that more than half of respondents say the six-month sentence is too severe, though they believe Gao has to pay for his behavior.



Gao Xiaosong listens in court before being sentenced for six months for driving under the influence.
CFP Photo

Comment

Zero tolerance

While the penalties seem severe, you'd want it to be harsher if a drunk driver maimed or killed someone close to you. Drunk driving is easily avoided. Many people's lives might be changed if drunk drivers are defined as criminals. I have zero tolerance for drunk driving.

— Simon,
government official

Leniency

It is not proper to make all cases of drunk driving a criminal offense. We need to have leniency at the judicial level. Different drunk-driving cases that cause different levels of harm should not be treated equally. For instance, if the drunk driver is a student and is convicted as a criminal, it might be a huge burden for the rest of his life.

— Shelly Wen, lawyer

Stick to new law

The law says drunk driving is punishable by a prison sentence. It is clear and in line with all foreign countries. No one should wait to punish drunk driving until a victim is found.

Besides, the law should also include punishment for people who spit at will, perhaps with a fine of 500 yuan to start with. It will be good

for the country.

— Felix, Irish engineer

Take away car keys

Whoever you are, you should be responsible for your behavior. But the best thing you can do for your friend when he gets drunk and insists on driving home is take away his car keys. He may get angry, but when he sobers up, he will thank you. If not, get a new friend. — Andreas, manager

Billionaire runs away for love



Wang announced Monday via Sina Weibo that he plans to elope with Wang Qin.

Bao Fan/CFP Photo

By Huang Daohen

Can money buy love? Billionaire Wang Gongquan, founder and head of CDH Investment, says no.

Wang, 50 and married, wrote Monday on his Sina Weibo that he would give up everything to run away with another woman.

"Relatives, friends and fellow colleagues, I have given up everything and eloped with Wang Qin," he wrote. Wang Qin was later identified as the 34-year-old founder of Jiangsu Zhongfu Science and Technology Industrial Group.

The two met only months ago and really got to know each other during a month-long vacation in Florida and Hawaii, Xinhua reported.

"I cannot face all your expectations and trust, and we also don't know how to explain this. I'm sorry for leaving without saying goodbye. I beg your forgiveness," Wang wrote.

Wang is one of the founders of Vantone, one of the country's largest developers. He also founded CDH, which claims a \$5.5 billion portfolio.

As of press time, the whereabouts of Wang remain unknown. Calls to CDH Investment and Zhongfu went unanswered Wednesday.

CDH said in an earlier statement that Wang is taking some time off and the company's funds were operating normally.

The Internet soon came alive with comments about Wang. As these things work, he received both support and condemnation. Some called him irresponsible for leaving his wife, while others envied his passion.

"People born in the 1960s are pitiable. They do not have much experience in love, and their love is only marriage-oriented," one netizen commented.

Comment

Do not judge others

What is happening to Wang now is sort of pitiful, as some maybe curse him and others laugh at him. But do remember that he is just human. After all, it's his decision to give up everything. We have no right to judge him.

— Robert, editor

Love matters

Chinese billionaire gives up

everything for love? How sweet — if true. It shows that money cannot make people feel real happiness, and that's good: we can always be happy as long as we are all together with the one we love. Love is what matters the most!

— Catherine Jones, secretary

Keep the money

Foolhardy, I think, is the word. Why can't he keep every-

thing and then elope? Money and love are not mutually exclusive. But since money and face are the driving forces behind Chinese culture, I'm sure he made a withdrawal from the bank first.

— Jeff Bass, college teacher

Choose divorce

Where will they run to, Shijiazhuang? In the digital world, how hard can it be to find the couple? You can follow the

money, credit card and passport use.

However, in this day and age, why would anyone bother with elopement when there's something called divorce — unless he's worried about money and doesn't want to share a penny with his current wife?

— Ryan Yao,
research manager

Another promotion?

You can't really trust what you see or hear nowadays, especially things online. An insider said this so-called elopement was a promotion because Wang and his mistress were starting a new company. They need publicity and this is it. It's a classic marketing case.

— Willion Zhan,
media officer

A bold and beautiful pose

African models persevere to find foothold in China

By Han Manman

The fewer the competitors, the better the chance to win: that's what African model Doris Okaka thought when she came to China to begin a new phase in her career.

Having modeled in Europe for five years, Doris believed Europe was no longer a wonderland for international models due to shrinking demand after the financial crisis.

She felt that with her strong African characteristics – dark, smooth skin and no hair – she could find more opportunities in China, where there is a shortage of African models. She came brimming with confidence, on the strength of a resume that included big runway shows in Africa and Europe.

But reality didn't square with expectations. Her persona and bold appearance – greatly admired in Europe and the US – was a barrier to finding jobs in China. She found other black models experiencing the same setbacks.

Instead of leaving, she and her peers became determined to be pioneers for African models in this Far East market.

“I wanted to try a different place where I am new and no one knows me. Actually, in modeling or anything you do, there are always competitors. If you go to the place with the fewest competitors, you'll increase your chances of being successful.”

New start for runway

Born in the same hometown as US president Barack Obama – Kisumu, Kenya – 24-year-old Doris Okaka has been modeling for six years, ever since she graduated from high school.

She said being a model is many Kenyan girls' dream – true for herself as well. “I never knew I'd take it as a career, though,” she said.

She went to Kenya's capital, Nairobi, after high school to try her luck. She was picked by a famous local telecom company to appear in their advertisements.

That immediately opened doors. The 18-year-old Okaka got to travel around Africa, and several months later, she got her big break: an Italian company asked her to move to Italy to become a professional model.

“They told me I was exactly the kind of model they wanted – black and bald,” Okaka said. She stayed in Italy for five years.

Many of Okaka's friends considered her lucky, so her decision to move to China was met with disbelief. She was called crazy.

“From their impression, China just buys and sells goods, exports and imports. No one thinks of the country as a place where models go,” Okaka said, adding that her friends all encouraged her to go to New York, Paris and Milan instead.

“In their minds, China isn't about fashion,” she said. “But it was good for me!”

Because of the financial crisis, jobs in Europe were hard to come by. All the while, more international models were streaming in.

“I wanted to try a different place where I am new and no one knows me,” Okaka said. “Actually, in modeling or anything you do, there are always competitors. If you go to the place with the fewest competitors, you'll increase your chances of being successful.”

Okaka thought China was her best chance to find outstanding success.



Okaka says the Chinese market has yet to accept black, bald models.

Photos provided by Doris Okaka

“The China market currently only features Asian models and white models. If people want to see a more internationalized and professional brand or fashion show, they need to include African models.”



After modeling in Europe for five years, Okaka thought better opportunities were elsewhere.

No wonderland here, either

Last year, Okaka went to Guangzhou with dreams of becoming famous in the city with the largest African community in China.

But she soon realized her chance of landing a job there were as slim as in Europe.

“Being black in Guangzhou is not a good image,” she said. “Though the African community in Guangzhou is really big, we've spoiled our reputation and have lost lots of respect from locals.”

In recent years, news about illegal African immigrants in Guangzhou Province and shady business deals and drug smugglers have been making headlines.

Okaka said she saw the vast majority of Africans engaging in good, wholesome business, but a small group destroyed the entire community's image.

“It's a pity people think of us like that,” she said.

She moved to Beijing to get a fresh start and be part of a more internationalized community.

It was a lucky move.

Within a month, she signed with Fusion Model Management

Company, a Beijing-based company that helps foreign models find runaway jobs in China.

Okaka was the only African model among the company's 25 foreign clients.

She said the company calls whenever a job becomes available, but that she's gotten fewer calls here than in Europe.

“The problem is that the Chinese aren't used to seeing black African models, especially ones without hair,” she said.

She compared herself to a Brazilian model also employed by Fusion: tanned skin, long hair. “That's what Chinese people think a foreign model should look like,” she said.

Doris said sometimes she felt hurt since she knew a little Chinese and could understand what Chinese clients would say about her.

But she still believes her look is very unique and is a strong selling point.

“Unique and different is what I have been selling,” she said. “I think that's natural beauty.”

Positive future

Vivian Zhang, international scout for Fusion, said she agrees with Okaka that the Chinese market isn't ready to accept black models.

She said the reason her company chose Okaka is because Beijing needed an international model with a special, avant-garde look for China Fashion Week.

“We thought Doris was the ideal person to fit that image,” Zhang said, adding that they also used black male models.

“But other than the annual fashion week, they don't have many opportunities in our company,” Zhang said, adding this was true for African models around the country.

“The thing is, most of their domestic clients still prefer white-skinned European models that look elegant or sweet,” she said.

But Zhang said she believes African models will have a brighter future, especially in Beijing, a rapidly internationalizing city.

She said Chinese people's traditional attitude towards fashion and beauty has been gradually changing.

Along with changing trends in Chinese fashion, more African

models will be used for Chinese designs, Zhang said.

Okaka shares Zhang's confidence about African models' future in China.

“The China market currently only features Asian models and white models. If people want to see a more internationalized and professional brand or fashion show, they need to include African models,” she said.

She said since there are few African models in China, if demand ever does rise, she'll be first in line.

To increase her chances, Okaka has enrolled in the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology to study Chinese language and fashion knowledge. She also tries to make herself visible at the city's big events and parties.

“As a model, you market yourself. You need to always look good, as you never know who might be impressed by you,” she said. “I was just working a regular job in Europe when I got picked up [by a modeling agency], and that changed my life.”

“I am a very strong woman, and never give up. I will keep waiting for the Chinese to accept us. Once they accept African models, I will make it,” Okaka said.

Polish embassy opens to public

By Annie Wei

The Polish embassy welcomed visitors on Monday as part of a European Union Open Days event.

Eighteen EU member states are participating in EU Open Days – on at least one day from May 6 to June 3, that country's embassy will open its doors to the public as part of efforts to strengthen EU-China relations.

The Polish Open Day started at 9:15 am with a speech by Poland's ambassador to China, Tadeusz Chomicki. "We hope the Chinese can learn more about Poland and the EU through this program," he said.

Students from the University of Warsaw performed a Warszawianka folk song and dance. The students' professional performance won applause from onlookers.

An interactive five-minute Polish language lesson allowed visitors the chance to learn some basic Polish from students at Beijing Foreign Studies University.

A student surnamed Yang from Beijing

University of Communication said Poland's Open Days event was the first that was "fully open to the public."

Yang Li, a woman working in overseas education, said she was participating in the event to learn more about Polish culture.

"I have been to many countries, and I think each has something symbolic about what it represents itself," she said. "I've been wondering what Poland's symbols are."

The last part of the event included a tour of the embassy. Visitors were invited to learn more about Poland's history and its relationship with China.

Since April, the Polish embassy has been hosting musical events such as Rock Loves Chopin, which featured more than 30 performers at the Chaoyang Pop Festival from April 40 to May 1. The show featured a rock and jazz band playing Chopin's music, a refreshing take on classical masterpieces.



Students perform a traditional Polish dance in front of the Polish embassy on Monday.

Photo provided by Polish embassy

Shanghai-Mauritius flight will open to boost tourism

By Zhang Dongya

A delegation from three island countries in the Indian Ocean – Mauritius, Madagascar and Reunion – including ministers in each of the country's tourism bureaus, visited China this week to promote their countries.

On Tuesday, they announced that direct flights from Shanghai to Mauritius will commence on July 5.

This direct flight will make a stop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"China has developed very fast and is becoming an economic superpower. About 60 million Chinese traveled out of the country last year, and it is estimated this figure

will reach 70, 80, 90 and 100 million very soon," said Nandoomar Bodha, Minister of Tourism of Mauritius, at a press conference.

"These tourists want to explore the world, and we – Mauritius, Madagascar and Reunion – want to present the Indian Ocean to the world," he said.

Shanghai, as China's financial center, is expected to attract more domestic tourists. The first flight will depart from Shanghai Pudong International Airport at 9:25 pm on July 5 and arrive in Mauritius after 13 hours and 40 minutes.

Currently, direct flights to Mauritius from China leave from only one place: Hong Kong.

"This flight from Shanghai is the only the first phase of our plans in China," said Donald Payen, the executive vice president of Air Mauritius. "In the second phase, we will offer a non-stop flight from Shanghai that is expected to open next February to meet Chinese people's travel plans during Chinese New Year."

He said the third phase of development would add yet another non-stop route from Shanghai to Mauritius, and the fourth phase will create direct flights between Mauritius and Beijing.

Since all three countries have a vanilla-planting culture, they are promoting "vanilla island travel" as part of a package deal.

Tourists can transfer to Reunion and Madagascar after arriving in Mauritius. In Mauritius and Madagascar, Chinese tourists can get travel visas at the airports.

Visas to Reunion from Mauritius are free for Chinese tourists who depart from Shanghai.

Karl Mootoosamy, director of Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA), Pascal Viroleau, director of Reunion Tourism, and Volanirina Natalia Raveloson, director executive of the National Tourism Office of Madagascar, attended the conference and talked about their countries' specialties. All expressed hope of promoting Indian Ocean tourism.

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Art you can buy



The 2011 Affordable Art Beijing fair at 798 Art Zone on May 14 and 15

Photo by Wei Xi

By Wei Xi

When talking about art, it's easy to get hung up on names of masters and the famous pieces one only sees in museums. But Affordable Art Beijing, a two-day exhibition at 798 Art Zone held over the weekend, was all about bringing art – of all sorts – to the masses.

Since 2006, the exhibition has provided a platform for young artists to show their works and a chance to sell them to ordinary people who want a bit of creativity in their lives.

About 1,000 contemporary pieces by more than 200 artists were displayed on May 14 and 15.

Works ranged from paintings to prints, photography to sculptures, and were priced between 200 yuan and 20,000 yuan.

A New York man named Rooney, who first visited the Affordable Art exhibition two years ago, said the art this year was similar to the past, but "the price is a little bit higher."

Rooney's daughter bought a photograph for 6,000 yuan.

Julia Bayly, who has lived in

Beijing for two and a half years, said she found much of the art had dark subject matter and interesting back-stories.

"It's hard to live with such works," she said, "but if I find some work that really attracts me, I would probably buy."

Li Xiaotong, a senior from North China Electric Power University, said she could somehow relate to most of the works. The price, however, was prohibitively high for a student such as herself, she said.

A Chinese artist in her 20s, who declined to give her name, said she submitted six pieces of digital prints but was disappointed that her works were not displayed.

In the exhibition hall, a number of young volunteers dressed in white T-shirts – most of them college students – provided information for visitors.

Volunteers Li Yilin and Feng Tiantian, sophomores at Beijing International Studies University, said they saw an advertisement on Douban for their position.

Both are hotel management

majors who are fond of art.

"We like volunteer work, but if it wasn't related to art, we would be less interested," Li said.

Prior to the exhibition, the girls helped unpack and classify pieces and broker deals with artists. During the two-day exhibition, they mainly assisted buyers.

Tom Pattinson, who founded Available Art Beijing in 2006, said there were more Chinese buyers this year than before.

He said the idea for such an exhibition came from his personal experience. As an art lover, he found it difficult to find affordable artwork.

"I think people may have the same problem I did," he said. "As I got to know more artists, I found they also wanted to present their works."

"And actually, art doesn't have to be expensive," he said.

Pattinson and his co-organizers began preparing for this exhibition about a month ago. They advertised it online and went to universities like Tsing-

hua University and the Central Academy of Fine Arts to recruit student participants.

Pattinson said they received works from about 1,000 people, which they narrowed to fewer than 300.

"Thirty to 40 percent of the artists are new to the exhibition," he said. "One or two of the artists are quite young, born in 1993 or 1994."

There were also works from senior artists. The oldest, Pattinson said, was in his 50s.

Although it took some negotiating, Pattinson was able to get half of the works on display priced at less than 5,000 yuan. Only a third of them cost more than 10,000 yuan.

Half of the works were sold and the rest returned to the artists, Pattinson said.

He said the quality of work this year was better, with a greater variety of styles and new subject matters.

"A lot less Cultural Revolution and a lot more contemporary, funny works," he said.

Event

Rock 'n' roll Saturday

Representing three different countries, three rock bands – Your Favorite Enemies (Canada), Subs (China), and The On Fires (Australia) – unite this Saturday at MAO Live House for the final performance of their China tour.

Where: MAO Live House, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 21, 9 pm

Email:

thistown@hotmail.com

Cost: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door

Learn mahjong from masters

Learn how the experts play mahjong in a two-session workshop. You'll learn the rules and also the history behind his game. Instructors are local mahjong masters who speak English. Reservation is required.

Where: 10 Shique Hutong, near Yonghegong, Dongcheng District

When: May 22 and 29, 10 am – 1 pm

Tel: 8404 4166

Cost: 140 yuan

Children's story time at The Bookworm

Bring your children to The Bookworm and participate in kid-friendly games and book readings, accompanied by music. Each week, Hanna and other storytellers will bring stories to life for listeners ages 4 and up.

Where: Building 4, Nan Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District

When: Sunday every week, 11 am – noon

Web site:

beijingbookworm.com

Cost: 50 yuan

(By Wei Xi)

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Two summer sports still looking for players

By Anthony Tao

Sports bring people together – an indisputable though odd fact considering the essence of sports is competition.

If you don't believe us, talk to Nathan Jones or Blake Margison, the respective organizers of a tackle football and tennis league currently seeking new players.



The Guardians Club League held its first game last Saturday at Chaoyang Park. Photo provided by Beijing Guardians

Tackle football, American style

When Nathan Jones, 31, first kicked around the idea of starting a tackle football league in Beijing in 2005, he was met by the usual arguments for why it wouldn't work: Chinese people aren't aggressive enough for tackle football; they're not big enough, not strong enough, not tough enough.

Jones pushed the idea to the back of his mind, but after working closely with the China State General Sports Administration in the year leading up to the Olympics – he was CEO of the Volunteer Training Program that prepared more than 1 million volunteers for their duties – an old thought surfaced: why couldn't American football succeed here?

"I saw that this year [2011] was the 40th anniversary of ping-pong diplomacy, so I thought, Wow, ping-pong made that much of a difference ... but to this day, there's

never been an American football team in China," Jones said. "How is that cultural exchange? It's supposed to go both ways."

He rounded up a group of coaches, including his brother from the US, and invested about 200,000 yuan of his own money to buy helmets and pads from the US and start up a league.

His work came to fruition last Saturday. As part of the upstart United Athletes China Football League, the Beijing Guardians held a five-on-five scrimmage at Chaoyang Park – the inaugural game of the Guardians Club League.

"I was determined – no matter how many people said no, or laughed, or said it can't be done – to make it happen," he said. "And we have. We had our first game."

In spite of never having made it past his junior varsity high school football team, Jones is a football fan who understands the

game. And he's been impressed – and pleasantly surprised – by the interest that locals have shown in this quintessential American sport. The majority of the Beijing Guardians are Chinese, with one who has experience playing in Europe as a placekicker.

Another of the players, a Pacific Islander, was a former Arena Football League player in the US.

"It's incredible to me that all these years, there was no opportunity – not one opportunity – in the history of China for people to play American football," Jones said.

His goal is to have 100 players and two more teams – four total – by the end of the year, plus all the equipment in place to make the league sustainable. In the short term, he'd like to organize a full 11-on-11 Fourth of July game and also invite a college team from the US to come to Beijing for an exhibition in the

fall or winter.

"It already is working," Jones said. "It's just a matter of giving people the opportunity to experience the game, to watch it, to play it. And people will definitely get excited about it. It's an amazing sport."

Beijing Guardians

Where: Field 4 and 9, Chaoyang Park, 1 Nongzhan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District (enter through the East gate with the huge statue of a basketball player)

When: Saturdays, 10-11:30 am (league games); Tuesdays, 6-8 pm (practice)

Cost: 600 yuan (400 yuan for students) to participate in the league, which runs until the end of June (includes all equipment); free to watch; practice is free to first-timers

Website: beijingguardians.com

Email: info@beijingguardians.com

Get your serve on

About a year and a half ago, Blake Margison – along with a handful of other Americans who were tired of non-American expats in Beijing confusing "football" with soccer – began meeting at Chaoyang Park to play football, the pigskin variety.

As their numbers grew, they looked around and did the only sensible thing: they started a league.

It was out of this flag football league, which recently concluded its third season, that the organization Mashup sprung up. Led by CEO Yoyao Hsueh, it's now expanded into a "sport and social" club run by about 10 core members.

Two of its leagues – bowling and basketball – recently finished up, and in the near future the organizers want to organize dodgeball and volleyball.

Mashup's current focus is tennis, specifically a coed doubles league – co-organized by Broadwell Tennis Club – consisting of 10 teams, each with five players.

"With all of our leagues, our main focus is, one, a way to get some exercise, and two, to meet new people," said Margison, who is directing the tennis league.

Registration for the tennis league – the first match is scheduled for May 31 – closes whenever the league fills up. There are about 20 openings still available. Individuals sign up and give themselves a rating based on a US Tennis Association system, and the league then distributes the players to ensure the most parity.

"We don't try to take things too seriously," Margison said. "It's inevitable that some people are

going to be that way, but that's not our main focus. We want to do something fun. It's also a way of meeting new people and doing something healthy."

"Besides sports, we want to do more events like for the Fourth of July, or other events that bring people together," he said.

Mashup Sport and Social Coed Mixed Doubles Tennis League

Where: Broadwell Tennis Club, east side of Chaoyang Park Tennis Center, 1 Nongzhan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: First match is May 31, 8-10 pm; every Tuesday until July 19

Cost: 580 yuan per person

Website: mashupasia.com

Email: blake@mashupasia.com



Mashup, which organizes a flag football league, is seeking teams for its tennis league. Photo provided by Mashup

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

I want to get some fabric, especially silk, and have them made into clothes. Does anyone know where I can get wholesale fabric?

There are a number of fabric markets in Muxiyuan. The largest is Jingdu Qingfangcheng. It provides a galaxy of fabrics such as silk, cashmere, lace, cotton and embroidery. You will also find both fake and real fur, zippers and buttons there. It's a place where you'll need to bargain. Don't get lost in the crowd though, as it is quite popular.

Address: Dahongmen Lu, south of Muxiyuan Qiao, South Third Ring Road Fengtai District (south of the Muxiyuan long-distance bus station)

I am an avid World of Warcraft player, but the connection at my hotel is too slow. Are there any Internet cafes around Sanlitun that accept foreigners? How much does it cost?

Most Internet cafes in Beijing accept foreigners, but you need to bring your passport. Be aware that they don't accept children under 18. Prices vary from place to place, but it is usually between 2 to 5 yuan per hour.

My company has many Chinese clients, so I think I need to improve my Chinese. I'd like to learn fast and by myself, though. Any suggestions?

I have to say there really isn't any quick and dirty way of learning any language, and every language demands practice. But for one-to-one online sessions – tutoring that doesn't require you to leave your home – you may want to try masterchinese.com. Different levels of Chinese classes are designed for different purposes, like traveling or doing business.

What are some traditional Chinese breakfast foods? I like xiaolongbao (miniature steamed buns) very much, but I haven't tried many other foods.

Xiaolongbao is indeed delicious, but also try shengjian, fried buns with sesame on the top. During colder weather, hot rice congee can warm you up quickly. Congee is especially popular in the south, and is made sweet or savory. Some places add meats, vegetables and herbs to really liven the taste. Other than that, soy milk and tofu jelly are popular and easily obtained in just about any neighborhood.

(By Wei Xi)

Curtains in Venice

Victoria Lu to step down as curator after last exhibition

By He Jianwei

Victoria Lu is putting an end to her 32-year curatorial career at this year's Venice Biennale. Her final exhibition will highlight the creative energy of contemporary Asian art.

Lu was the first person to translate the concept of a curator into Chinese, though she has since been extremely disappointed by

the career's development in China. Most Chinese curators are more obsessed with big profits than art, she said.

The final exhibition, which will bring together 150 Asian artists over two months, is something Lu hopes will make a final mark on the art scene by revealing the latest aesthetic movements.

Lu's red hair makes her stand out in the crowd as much as her radiant smile.

But her radiant smile conceals her grandmother of two announced last Friday that she will be retiring from her position as curator at Today Art Museum.

The retirement announcement was not a shock – Lu has been mulling the option in public for several years. Her grandmother was the first with any degree of finality.

Lu turns 60 this year, and her parents have moved from the US to Taiwan to live out their final years. "I'm lucky to have parents who are still alive when I'm 60. I hope to keep them company during the rest of their lives," she said.

Lu studied painting at California State University. She began her curatorial career in the late 1970s when she returned to Taiwan.

In the dictionary, curator was translated into Chinese as "director of a museum." In the 1980s, when Lu translated the word into Chinese, the new translation, *cehanren*, the person who designs an exhibition.

She did not expect her new invented job title to launch a movement.

"When I translated this word, I meant it to mean that a curator was one who could discuss academic issues and make decisions. The curator must be responsible for the academic message of an exhibition, as well as its investment."

Many exhibitions are underfunded and curators play clean-up, helping to ensure the exhibition has the funding needed to open. Lu has for the monetary side of things. Lu has been forced to work as a fundraiser at several of her exhibitions. Her last required an investment of C\$ million (9.3 million yuan).

When Lu was approved for the Venice Biennale this February, she had no money at all to make the exhibit happen.

Lu invited the artist Yang Na to create a new character called "Yiki Lu Lu," which will be used to promote young artists on the Web, replacing Lu's role as curator.

Lu said she will use her free time to write scripts for TV dramas and to work as a curator in Taiwan's communities for the elderly.

"I'm trying to make up for lost time by being with my family. In the first half of my life I served the youth. Now it's time for me to serve the elderly," she said.

one of her relatives who works in finance asked her to my free why she spent so much time on art. Lu said, "I didn't have a choice. I'm the director, and I'm afraid of failing to live up to her expectations."

Since being approved, Lu has worked on the exhibition 12 hours a day – some days working 24 hours non-stop.

She has been visiting the artists to discuss her ideas with them. Due to the heavy workload, Lu has not been allowed to participate in the exhibition – it's already the most artists to ever participate in the Venice Biennale.

Lu considers herself as a romantic idealist and unsuited to the business world. In the past 32 years, she has never once turned a profit from selling her art. She has been writing for newspapers and magazines.

In addition to creating a Chinese word for curators, Lu also coined the English portmanteau "animamix" – a combination of animation and comics – to describe a new aesthetic phenomenon of comic books, cartoons and animation art since the new millennium.

Lu says the most interesting part of animamix is its human, humanoid and animal characters that never age. "Disney's Mickey Mouse is over 80 years old, but he is still just as lovely as he was at the time of creation. The same is true of the characters in animamix."

Her exhibition searches for the future of contemporary art.

Japanese artist Takashi Murakami may be one example of the future. He creates derivative products with fashion brands. "In the future, an artist will have to be versatile. And an artwork must be produced by an individual artist," she said.

More and more artists are making the leap to electronic media, and generation is growing up with this new digital environment.

In preparation for her retirement, Lu invited the artist Yang Na to create a new character called "Yiki Lu Lu," which will be used to promote young artists on the Web, replacing Lu's role as curator.

Lu said she will use her free time to write scripts for TV dramas and to work as a curator in Taiwan's communities for the elderly.

"I'm trying to make up for lost time by being with my family. In the first half of my life I served the youth. Now it's time for me to serve the elderly," she said.



1



2

1. Yoshitomo Nara
2. Yang Na's Yiki Lu Lu
3. Rolf A. Kuenster's ANIMA-FLUX
4. Takashi Murakami
5. Gary Baseman's Beyond The Hills Of Creamy Goodness

Photos provided by Today Art Museum



4

"I decided to abandon my project several times. One evening, as I stood on the roof watching the city's twinkling lights, I had thought of jumping off. I gave up this idea quickly, because the faces of the artists appeared in my mind."

"I'm trying to make up for lost time by being with my family. In the first half of my life I served the youth. Now it's time for me to serve the elderly."



5



Victoria Lu (left) in Venice



3

Anti-Semitism traced to financial illiteracy

By Charles Zhu

The question of why so many Jews are so good at banking has long been on the minds of many.

Thinkers from Aristotle through the Renaissance believed that money should be considered sterile: a mere means of exchange incapable of producing additional value. Only labor could be truly productive, and anyone who extracted money from money alone – that is, through interest – was a parasite, or at the very least a fraud.

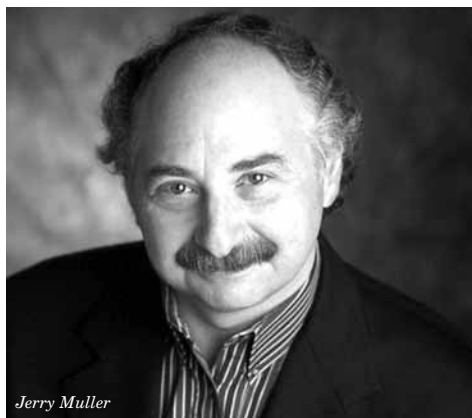
For centuries, usury has been a source of resentment and violence. Given that ugly history, it's no wonder so few Jews and gentiles are comfortable discussing Jewish capitalistic competence.

In *Capitalism and the Jews*, historian Jerry Muller, a professor at Catholic University of America, presents a comprehensive survey of how Jewish culture leads Jews to both commercial success and misfortune.

Muller describes Jews as having made great contributions to international banking – Jews founded Lehman Brothers and Goldman Sachs, and helped establish Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank in Germany, as well as Credit Mobilier in France – and that much anti-Semitism actually originates from a misunderstanding of basic economics.

Lending at interest was forbidden across Christian Europe – to Christians. The Bible contended that charging interest was sinful, inspiring Dante to consign usurers to the seventh circle of hell.

"Usury was an important concept with a long shadow. It was significant because the condemnation of lending money at interest was based on the presumptive



Jerry Muller

CAPITALISM AND THE JEWS

JERRY Z. MULLER

Capitalism and the Jews

By Jerry Muller, 272pp, Princeton University Press, \$24.95

Jews, who constituted about 4 percent of the inhabitants of Berlin, paid 30 percent of the municipal taxes.

Muller says the success of the Jews may be due to their religious values. "Unlike Christianity, Judaism considered poverty anything but ennobling," he writes. He quotes a passage from the Talmud on division of labor that presages Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

The Jewish culture that valued literacy, abstract thinking, trade and specialization gave Jews the human capital and the spiritual power necessary to succeed in modern capitalism.

Unsurprisingly, Jews were very much despised for the high interest rates – up to 60 percent – that they charged. Capital was scarce, and lenders frequently risked having their debtors' obli-

gations canceled or their own assets arbitrarily seized by the government.

The book contends that views of capitalism and views of the Jews have a way of overlapping and influencing each other.

"For centuries, Jewish economic success led anti-Semites to condemn capitalism as a form of Jewish domination and exploitation," Muller writes. "In addition, the way in which modern, non-Jewish intellectuals thought about capitalism was often related to how they thought about Jews."

"An affirmative approach toward capitalism often went together with a measure of sympathy toward the Jews, while antipathy to commerce and antipathy to the Jews typically went hand in hand," Muller says.

Many of the top capitalist theorists have been Jewish, or of Jewish stock: Milton Friedman, Alan Greenspan, Ayn Rand, Ludwig Von Mises and Irving Kristol, and Margaret Thatcher's advisers Keith Joseph, Leon Brittan and Nigel Lawson, to name but a few.

He also named the Bolshevik leaders Leon Trotsky, Yakov Sverdlov, Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev as those who benefitted from Jewish culture.

For centuries, financial illiteracy has made many prejudiced toward Jews, painting economic competence and virtuosity as a social vice.

"There are few peoples, if any in the world, who owe so great a debt to free enterprise and competitive capitalism as the Jews," said Friedman. "There are few peoples, if any in the world, who have done so much to undermine the intellectual foundations of capitalism as the Jews."

Fallen women find honor amid Nanjing's chaos

By Xinji Letu

Fans of Zhang Yimou can get a glimpse of his upcoming movie, *The 13 Women of Nanjing*, in the form of a new novelization by bestselling author Yan Geling.

But Yan, also the film's screenwriter, says the main plot is all that these two incarnations share.

"When a novelist continues to rewrite his or her own work in the light of experience and understanding, that work will evolve to become better and better," she said at last Saturday's book release in One Way Street Bookstore, explaining her decision to rewrite the story.

The 13 Women of Nanjing tells the tragedy of 13 Chinese prostitutes who hid in an American-owned church during the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 and who volunteered to stand in for university students who were conscripted as sex slaves for the invading Japanese soldiers.



The 13 Women of Nanjing
By Yan Geling, 224pp, Shaanxi Normal University Press, 26.80 yuan

The prostitutes arrived on the eve of the massacre, December 12, seeking shelter. Despite their provocative clothing, the priest allowed them in.

Having escaped from a brothel by the river bank, the women were seen as special by

students living at the church. However, their newfound shelter would not last long.

One evening, a Japanese general who heard the church choir decided to invite its girls to sing at the military camp to help the soldiers "celebrate Christmas." Realizing the general's true intentions, the 13 prostitutes stepped forward to replace the students.

They left that night for the Japanese camp.

Instead of drawing a brutal picture of the invasion, Yan focused on these "special women" who transformed from disgrace to goodness amid bloodshed.

"Women are the greatest victims in any war. But they have been more resilient and reliable than men in most of history's upheavals," Yan said.

Yan said she rewrote the story based on her research during and after the days she spent crafting the movie script. One book in particular, written

by her father's uncle, a senior military doctor in the Kuomintang army, gave plenty of details of the massacre.

"I thought what he had written down was very important, so I decided to add it to my full-length novel," Yan said.

How old generations see the massacre was also an issue with which Yan struggled. "Even though I'm an overseas Chinese, I often attend gatherings in memory of the Nanjing Massacre. I think later generations still remember it, so I tried to add some reflections of the tragedy in my novel," she said.

"Every human is the same and every life is innocent. Anyone who has experienced war knows it is cruel and repulsive," she said. Yan said her experience of living in Berlin left her with a great appreciation for how Germans are willing to confront their own history.

"A nation's greatness depends on wisdom and the ability to think," Yan said.

Trends Lounge book listing

Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of books about international art, design and architecture.



Poem of the Pillow and Other Stories

By Gian Carlo Calza, 464pp, Phaidon Press, \$49.95

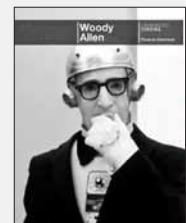
Shunga – the famous Japanese erotic pillow books known euphemistically as "spring images" – were vibrant, curious and explicit documents of sexual life, written to inform, thrill and entertain. This book presents a comprehensive modern study on Japanese erotic art, illustrating a large selection of the best works from public and private collections from around the world.



Fired by Passion

Edited by The Chilton Editors, 1,432pp, Arnoldische Verlagsgesellschaft, \$275

Paquier, an independent Viennese porcelain factory, was established in 1718, only eight years after Meissen. This first comprehensive history of the porcelain factory was made possible by a five-year research program conducted by the Melinda and Paul Sullivan Foundation for the Decorative Arts.



Woody Allen

By Florence Colombani, 102pp, Phaidon Press, \$9.95

Woody Allen has been a major comic director since the 1970s. Writer, director and actor, his self-portrayal as a neurotic, intellectual, sex-obsessed, Jewish New Yorker seeking comfort in psychoanalysis brought him popular success and fame as a writer. This book is part of the Masters of Cinema series.

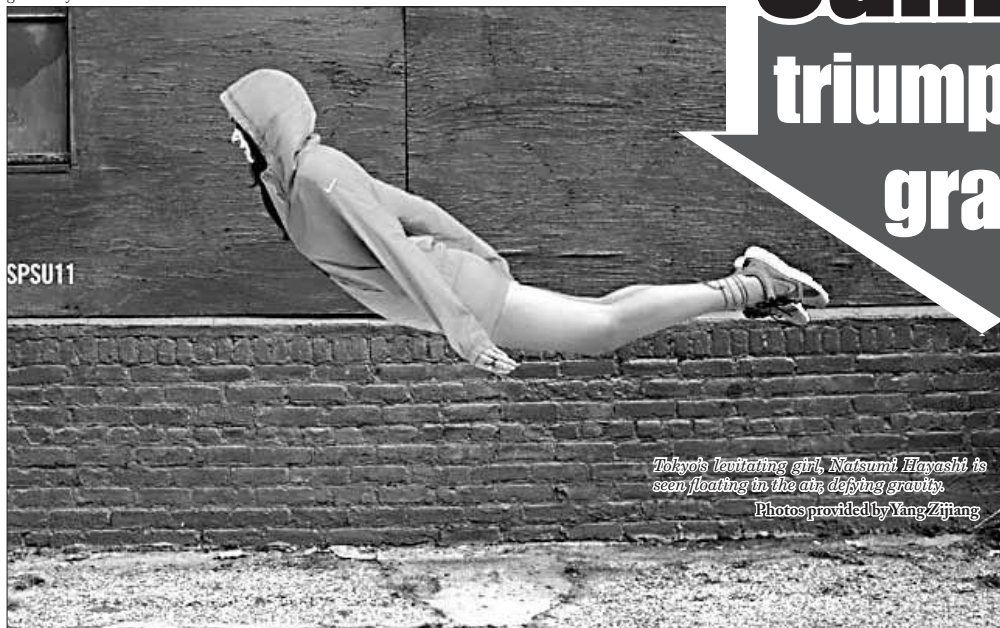
(By He Jianwei)

By Chu Meng

Whether it is by exploring the South Pole, walking the ocean floor or traveling to the moon, people love to triumph over nature.

But no one has triumphed over gravity.

Amateur photographer Yang Zijiang and his levitation photography team aim to change that – at least for a fraction of a second. Their miraculous photos capture subjects who appear to be floating gracefully in mid-air.



Tokyo's levitating girl, Natsumi Hayashi is seen floating in the air, defying gravity.

Photos provided by Yang Zijiang

Cameras triumph over gravity

Skills needed to shoot levitation

Yang says there are three magic elements that have to come together to make a good levitation photo: posture, expression and shutter timing.

Modeling tips

1. Relax as much as possible. Muscular tension in the neck is a dead giveaway that can ruin a levitation photo.

2. Stretch your toes slightly. Naturally relaxed toes will make it look like you are levitating, whereas tightly curled toes make it appear as though you were just jumping.

3. Make sure your model's posture matches the surrounding environment. An odd pose will make the photos appear too unnatural.

4. Make sure your model is not wearing a short skirt to avoid embarrassment. Those who are not professional dancers or acrobats should **avoid wearing heeled shoes** – these can cause serious injury when landing.

5. Shoot from a low angle to the model. The lower you get your lens, the higher the model will appear to float.

6. Ensure that the model's shadow is included in the shot to avoid drawing accusations of digital manipulation. You will **need to shoot on a sunny day** to make sure there are shadows. Strong and straight sunlight also serves to exaggerate the illusion of levitation.

7. Always shoot while the model is on the way up instead of on the way down. This will ensure that the hair lies naturally.

8. Get creative with poses, but make sure whatever you come up with is beautiful and graceful. Don't forget, you have to actually be able to capture the posture with a camera. Keep things basic, but creative.

Camera tips

1. If using an SLR camera, be sure it is **set to auto-focus and continuous shooting**, the settings commonly used for action photography.

2. Chose a shutter speed faster than 1/500 of a second.

3. On a digital camera, choose an **ISO rating of between 200 and 400**, depending on sunlight intensity.

4. Users of point-and-shoot digital cameras should **take shutter lag into consideration**.

Hui Yuxuan, a junior from China Communication University, has been enjoying her new status as the model for a Beijing-based levitation photography group. She participates in their shoots twice a month just for fun.

Unlike the outdated jumping photos, frequently taken at the beach, levitation photos have a new flair. Subjects appear to float gracefully – without the pesky interference of gravity.

Hui "floats" in the garden, at the supermarket, in the bathroom at home, in the train station and other public spaces.

The results command attention.

Many viewers stop unconsciously to stare at the gravity-defying scenes for minutes, trying hard to seek an answer from their knowledge of basic physics.

Given her background in English broadcasting and hosting, Hui is used to having to appear beautiful for all kinds of cameras. She loves to be photographed on campus, on the street, in the hutong or between office buildings.

"Looking through all my modeling photos, I love my levitation sets the best – even if they're not the most beautiful. There are millions of beautiful and inspiring photographs in the world, but none are more thought-provoking and inspiring than those," she said.

"They sparkle in front of people's eyes. They make me look unique," Hui said.

The shoots were done by a levitation

photography studio organized by Yang Zijiang, a 30-something amateur photographer. Despite full-time employment as the director of GRE study center under New Oriental Education and Technology Group, his studio has become Beijing's most famous producer of levitation photography.

"In March, while searching YouTube for materials I could use in my GRE class, I found a shocking levitation photo album published by a Tokyo university student, Natsumi Hayashi," he said. "I was captivated by her album of 150 of these miraculous photos."

Hayashi became an Internet sensation in March with her levitating self-portraits.

"We are all surrounded by social stress and bound by the forces of the Earth's gravity. I hope that people feel an instant release from their stressful days when they see my levitation photos," Hayashi wrote.

Hayashi is an amateur photographer in Tokyo who can be spotted jumping up and down around the city armed with her SLR camera. Her amazing self-timed captures are taken at exactly the right moment to show Hayashi levitating in her surroundings.

"Technically speaking, they are nothing tricky. Her photos were basically jumping shots taken at trick angles and made with the assistance of intentional lighting. The key is really timing the shutter and controlling the body's motion," Yang said.

"It's the kind of thing that takes incredible patience – especially when you're doing it yourself," he said.

After hours spent examining Hayashi's photos to unravel her technique, Yang found it boiled down to creativity and innovation.

Something creative does not have to be wholly new: a new angle on something com-

monplace is creative in its own right, Yang said.

And so he decided to establish his own levitation photography studio. To date, his studio has 15 crew members and has held two events in the Jianwai SOHO area.

"The key is timing. People have to master operating their shutter with the rhythm of the model's jump. Precise shutter timing is what makes or breaks a levitation photograph," he said.

So far, the only gap between Yang's studio and Hayashi is a lack of creative poses. "Good poses should be creative, graceful, possible and safe. We don't want to experiment with extreme poses that might end up hurting the model," he said.



Notable levitation photographers

Li Riwei is a professional special effects photographer and behavior artist in Beijing. His gravity-defying photographs have been exhibited as alternative art in China and abroad since April 2010.

Web: sheya.net/sheying/image/201103/3550-1.html

Franck Bohbot calls himself a levitation artist. The Parisian's works have been circling the Web since January. The uniqueness of his levitating subjects is astounding, adding a trippy element to each scene. Each photograph features a

floating person who is not noticeable at first glance.

Web: pplock.com/2011/franck-bohbot-photo-series-suspended/

"**Face Down on the Streets Girls**" has overtaken Tokyo's floating girls in terms of online popularity. The two Taiwanese women – Jin Yu, 25, and Karen Jiang, 28 – pose with their bodies erect but slightly facing to the ground. Their sets are shot at Taiwan's most popular tourist destinations.

Web: blog.asikart.com/visions/entertainment/298-taipei-lying-girl.html



Natsumi Hayashi, seen on the street.

Lamp cover, 89 yuan



Memory Re-design launches new products from old materials



Designer Wei Minghui



Notebook, 90 yuan



Vintage bag, 369 yuan

By Annie Wei

Memory Re-design, the first and only brand in China that turns waste into everyday items such as bags and notebooks – and even bigger products like suitcases – recently unveiled a new line of goods.

In founder Wei Minghui's spacious workshop are piles of used one-way vision, tarpaulin and PVC foam sheets. More than a dozen new products like coasters, bags, ties and lamp covers lie scattered around.

The 32-year-old designer from Harbin, Heilongjiang Province directs a print design company. Memory Re-design is just a side project.

Inspired by Japanese designer Kenya Hara's "re-design" concept and FREITAG, a Swiss bag brand whose products are from used canvas, Wei started his brand in 2009.

His concept is to reuse materials and increase environmental awareness.

"Many people think new things are much prettier, but things made out of used materials have their own charms," Wei said. No two recycled products are alike because the way they are assembled is unique.

However, products made of recycled materials are usually more expensive than new ones. A photo frame made of pressed magazine covers costs 40 yuan, almost twice that of a small wood frame from IKEA; a suitcase with a one-way vision sheet

finish starts from 700 yuan.

Wei said that using discarded materials is more complicated and time-consuming. For example, the notebook he uses costs 100 yuan because it requires dozens of magazines to assemble.

Finding factories that are willing to handle small productions is also a complicated procedure and a challenge for Wei.

There is no way to turn a profit by designing such products for the mass market. However, Wei's design concept has been recognized by a few high-end brands like iPad and Lamy, a German pen company.

Wei has designed a series of iPad cases made of used materials, as well as Lamy pen packages made out of used magazines.

Due to cost concerns and limited production, Wei's designs are mainly available at a few stores like B.N.C at Sanlitun Village North or the UCCA store at 798.

B.N.C

Where: NLG-09a B1, Sanlitun Village North, Chaoyang District

Open: 12:30-8:30 pm

Tel: 6416 9045

UCCA store

Where: Inside 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 7 pm from Tuesday to Sunday, closed on Mondays

Tel: 8610 8171



Bag/pillow, 199 yuan



Wallet, 69 yuan



Photo frame, 39 yuan



Tie, 79 yuan



Coasters, 10 yuan

Photos by Wei Minghui

Take a coffee break in another city

By Annie Wei

Increased living costs have caused some companies to relocate from Beijing to Tianjin, where a salary of 5,000 to 8,000 yuan a month can buy a luxurious lifestyle.

Tianjin's burgeoning middle class, meanwhile, has been enjoying an upgraded yuppie scene.

"In the last two years, more coffee shops have opened, each with its own specialty," said Tian Yuan, lifestyle editor of the local fashion magazine *Elegancy*. She introduced three newly opened cafes worth checking out if you're ever in the area.

Art lover's nest

Owned by a man nicknamed Dachu, who graduated with an architecture degree, Baidilu is a cozy coffee shop next to the leading colleges of Tianjin University and Nankai University.

The cafe's window frames are painted red, as are the bricks and wood floor inside. The floors aren't actually wood – "out of environmental concern," Tian said.

What impressed Tian the most is Dachu's meticulousness. "He is precise about making coffee, such as making sure each cup of cappuccino is made within 28 seconds," she said. "And he is so careful in creating the latte art for each customer."

Tian recommends the house's special espresso (30 yuan) with strong double flavor; Dachu's special tiramisu latte (30 yuan) and honey Macchiato (30 yuan), which has a sweet and soothing taste; bitter almond Macchiato (30 yuan), welcomed by mature male customers who don't like sweets; and marshmallow cappuccino (30 yuan), loved by women customers who like pink.



Special espresso, 30 yuan

Dachu is known as the "almighty Dachu," Tian said, because he not only makes good coffee, but also paints and plays the guitar. "His dream is to have his own exhibition in the cafe," Tian said. Videos of him playing "Hotel California" can be found online.

Rose & Hand

Where: 261 Baidilu, Nankai District, Tianjin
Open: 10 am – 11 pm
Tel: 022-8789 1234
Cost: Average 30 yuan per person



Macchiato, 30 yuan

Inside Café Alice

Hand-ground beans from South Korea

Many South Koreans call Tianjin home, but Café Alice, run by a South Korean woman named Kim Mi Jeong, has won a more diverse customer base because of her attention to details.

A good cup of coffee is decided by the beans and water quality. Every morning at 8, Kim arrives at the store ready to work: baking the coffee beans from Brazil, Chile and Colombia and using the expensive coffee roaster imported from South Korea. Customers on the street can smell the aroma.

Tian recommends a cup of Kim's hand-ground coffee (28 yuan). "The black coffee has a natural smoothness and slightly sweet after-taste," she said.

All kinds of coffee are 28 yuan per cup.

Café Alice

Where: A1-63 Aocheng Guangchang, Bingshui Dao, Nankai District

Open: 8 am – 11 pm (Monday to Thursday); 8 am – midnight (Friday to Sunday)

Tel: 022-5838 7652

Cost: 28 yuan for coffee, 70 yuan per person for dining



Owner Kim Mi Jeong

1930s ambiance

The vintage trend is going strong at Modern Memory Café, where people go not only for coffee but also to be immersed in chic 1930s style.

The cafe is packed with vintage furniture, from ceramic cups to old-fashioned radios and furniture. Owner Zhao Chenpu, in his late 20s, used to sell antique furniture, so he understands what appeals. He opened a coffee shop because he likes coffee and because he had too many antiques lying around.

Zhao now has two stores, each with a strong vintage style that makes customers feel like they've walked into a different time.

Modern Memory Café

Where: VIP202 Saidun Zhongxin, Xikang Lu, Nankai District
Open: 8 am – 11 pm
Tel: 022-2333 6379
Cost: Average 40 yuan per person



Inside Modern Memory Café (top)

Mocha, 30 yuan (left)

Photos by Zhou Pu



WELCOME TO THE ICE AGE

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ICE COLD COSTA

Avant-garde art on full display



5 Friday, May 20

Nightlife Summer Wave

Five local bands – Perdel, Youth, Jacky Danny, Gao

Shan and Sweater Brother – promise their music will deliver everlasting love.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 50 yuan advance purchase, 60 yuan at the door

Tel: 6402 5080

Exhibition

Their Horns – Yan Chao's Solo Exhibition

Artist Yan Chao shows his new works: everyone has horns on their head, symbolizing the struggle against both the outside and inner world.

Where: Hanmo Gallery, 3818 Warehouse, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 9, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6435 8922

Movie

India Song (1975)

Set in colonial India during the 1930s, this experimental French movie presents a composite account of the tragic love story of Anne-Marie Stretter, wife of the French ambassador to India.

Where: UCCA, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 15 yuan, free for UCCA members
Tel: 8459 9269



Sunday, May 22

Exhibition A First Life Residency Project in Landscape

This group exhibition serves as a cultural exchange about "real life," involving six artists from China and Australia.

Where: Xin Dong Cheng Space for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 30, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: free
Tel: 6433 4579

Nightlife



Toreador

After three years of work, Toreador recently released its

By He Jianwei

After two decades in China, British curator Karen Smith has witnessed many significant landmarks in Chinese contemporary art – and made some of her own. Her 2005 book – *Nine Lives: The Birth of Avant-Garde Art in New China* – was one of the first systematic studies of Chinese contemporary art by a foreign critic.

In an exhibition at Today Art Museum that opened on May 15, Smith brought together the works of 14 artists she has collaborated with in the past 20 years.

Titled *Hive*, each artist has his or her own exhibition space that acts like "an individual cell in which each artist shows their creativity," Smith said. "It is like a bee introducing pollen to a hive and transforming it into honey."

Combining photography and painting, the artist Wang Jinsong presents a scene of people looking at art in the piece "New Pictures of the Floating World."

In his work, he mocks the spectators, who only care about the buzz around art and not the art itself; on the other hand, Wang is interested in discovering something about the real people who view this piece.

Wang said he never paints for an audience. He paints because he likes to paint.

"China is in a continual state of economical and social change, which is reflected in the way people think, in the way they dress, in their attitudes toward culture and art," he said. "They are the focus of my art."

It's an issue that artists in modern China must confront. With the market attracting speculators, it's inevitable that both artists and critics would pay more attention to the monetary value of works.

"Have we entered a new era, a new world of art, in which culture is more entertainment or trophy product than a source of inspiration, comfort or social critique?" Smith said.

The exhibition is central to Fat Art, a series of large-scale interactive art shows created and established by Today Art Museum and the musical label Modern Sky.

From May 20 to 26, Modern Sky's bands will give nightly performances at Yugongyishan.

Hive – Exhibition of Fat Art 2011

Where: Third Hall of Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baiziwang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 24, 10 am – 5 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5876 9804

6 Saturday, May 21

Movie Bal (2010)

This Turkish movie depicts how the quiet life of a boy and his

family is endangered when his father does not return home one day from collecting honey in the forest.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8001

Exhibition

Spring – Hong Haochang Solo Exhibition

This exhibition shows the oil paintings of Hong Haochang, who uses bright yellow to represent the feeling of spring.

Where: Beijing Cocolan Art Center, 39-51 Building 6, 22 Street, Baiziwang Lu, Art District, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 9, daily

except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5807 4911

Nightlife

Magic Love – Andrea Bocelli Asia Tour

Collaborating with China National Opera House Symphony Orchestra and China National Opera House Chorus, Italian tenor Bocelli presents classical and pop songs, such as arias from Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and Verdi's *La Traviata*.

Where: National Indoor Stadium, Olympic Area, 18 Beichen Dong Lu, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-3,800 yuan
Tel: 400 610 3721



second album, *My Soul's Dark*.
Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Movie

Thomas Mao (2010)

Set in Inner Mongolia's grassland, a German visitor stays at a Chinese herdsman's house, sparking a cultural conflict.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north

section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8001



(By Xinji Letu)

Upcoming

Nightlife Dolan

Mongolian rock band Dolan plays traditional Mongolian songs in a new style.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 26, 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6401 5269

Stage in June

Concert

Anuna Ireland National Choir

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: June 14, 7:30 pm
Admission: 120-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Dresden Philharmonic

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 18, 7:30 pm
Admission: 200-880 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet Piano Recital

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaochengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: June 28, 7:30 pm
Admission: 30-580 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Lucerne Symphony Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 28-29, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-880 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Haze presented by Beijing Dance Theater

Where: Multi-functional Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 17-18, 7:30 pm
Admission: 160-240 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

The Yellow Storm

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 3-12, 7:30 pm
Admission: 200-680 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Soft

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: June 21-26, 7:30 pm
Admission: 150-580 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Opera

The Bat

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 3-6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 160-680 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Natural ways to treat hernias

By Li Zhixin

The first sign of a groin hernia is a swelling in the abdominal region. At first the discomfort may be easy to ignore, but the rupture can grow and cause the intestines to press painfully out of their cavity.

A hernia can be painful and embarrassing, and if left untreated it can develop malignant complications.

From an abdominal bulge

For Li Xiangzhi, a 35-year-old who has been weight training since 2008, routine exercise is a significant part of his life.

But this year, Li found himself developing an ache in his groin three times each week. The bouts of pain radiated into his stomach and were accompanied by nausea.

When he complained to his fitness instructor about the pain, he was assured that it was a minor muscle strain that would subside if he rested and avoided stress.

But as time went on, the possibility of muscle strain became less and less likely.

The pain began to come a few hours after exercise and would pass after an hour or so. While not severe, Li described the pain as "inconvenient."

Several weeks of physically demanding business trips brought the condition to a peak, and Li began to notice a

moderately painful lump at the join of his scrotum and groin.

"It was very evident when I had sex. It was embarrassing, not to mention painful," he said.

He went to the hospital to examine whether his testicles had any signs of damage, and it was then that his doctor informed him he had a groin hernia.

Groin hernias occur when intestinal tissue protrudes through a weak spot in the inguinal canal, an opening between the layers of abdominal muscle in the groin area.

"Excessive pressure on the abdominal wall, such as the strain of heavy lifting, can cause a hernia," said Wang Minggang, a doctor at Chaoyang Hospital. "Extra fat and thickness of the abdominal wall can keep hernias from forming, so obese men have a lower hernia risk than men who are thin."

Causes of hernia

Traditional Chinese medicine view groin hernia as a disorder of the liver and *ren* channels, which show symptomatic signs in the inguinal and genital region on the front of the body.

The three main causes of groin hernia are stagnation of qi in the liver channel, cold in the liver channel or deficiency of the spleen.

Most people develop hernias in the stomach, but they are not restricted to that area. Hernias are basically bumps in the walls of various organs and can occur in other internal organs such as the kidneys or liver. "The laxity of muscles in the stomach wall makes the stomach rather susceptible to hernias," Wang said.

Patients usually fail to notice the beginnings of a hernia as most begin quite quietly. They often begin as very small and unremarkable bumps under the skin. This is why lumps deserve special attention: not only can they be an indicator of a tumor, but also of an early hernia.

Hernias do not remain as small lumps. They progress to larger ones. Once a hernia

gets big enough, it is called an incarcerated hernia. As the hernia continues to grow, pushing through the weakest point of the organ's wall, it becomes more painful and it can cause other complications.

The bulge leaves a hole in the wall. The bigger the bulge, the bigger the hole it leaves behind. After a while, the organ responds. It moves to close the gap and create a smooth wall. When this happens, the organ can end up being pinched off.

This pinching off effect can have serious consequences for the organ. It cripples blood flow, occasionally halting it completely. Since blood is the source of the organ's oxygen and nutrients, it can begin to shut down and die when starved.

Early treatment is very important for hernias once you suspect that it exists. If you catch a hernia early enough, the bulge can actually just be pushed back into place. If the hernia has progressed beyond the point at which it can be pushed back into place, surgery will be required to repair the damage.



CFP Photo

Acupuncture and herbal treatment

Acupuncture and herbal medication can treat early inguinal hernias.

Treatment for inguinal hernias with acupuncture involves inserting small needles into the lower abdominal region to relieve pain and aid the flow of qi in the liver channel.

Indirect moxibustion is also used for distal acupuncture on points on the liver and spleen channels.

Moxa is wrapped around the tip of the needle inserted into an acupoint. The tip of the needle is lit, causing heat to be generated and applied to the point and surrounding body area. The moxa is then extinguished and the needle removed after the desired result is reached.

Prevention

1. Don't exercise on a full stomach.
2. Drink a cup of aloe vera juice in the morning and again at night and include extra fiber in your diet.
3. Avoid eating large meals.
4. Don't eat for at least two hours before going to sleep.
5. Don't bend over or lie down after eating.

Another indirect moxibustion treatment uses a lit moxa stick and holding it close to the hernia point until the area turns red.

Herbs that can help move liver qi, warm the channels, nourish the spleen and balance yin and yang include:

1. Gotu kola leaf (*jixuecao*) is useful for healing wounds and as a general tonic.
2. Ginseng helps strengthen internal defenses.
3. Slippery elm (*yushu*) and chamomile (*ganju*) are both tested and potent cures for hernia.

For a local poultice, you can fry 60 grams of nut grass root (*xiangfu*) with 20 grams of rock salt. Wrap the mixture in cheesecloth and place it on the affected area for 20 minutes each day.

6. Avoid eating fats or high-cholesterol foods that cause bloating.
7. Avoid constipation, avoid straining during bowel movements and protect your back when lifting heavy objects.
8. Avoid wearing tight clothes around your chest or abdomen because they can put pressure on your stomach.

Rediscovering Shichahai

Staid bar district adds new folk attractions

By Zhang Dongya

Shichahai, today a nightlife hotspot, was an important grain port as early as 1293 during the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368).

The district's location near the Grand Canal was pivotal for commerce, as it was one of the few loading stations next to water in Beijing. Shichahai consists of three areas, all with "sea" in the name though they're all ponds and lakes: Xihai (West Sea), Qianhai (Front Sea) and – the most well known of the three – Houhai (Back Sea).



A total of 28 oar-propelled boats cruise in Shichahai, trying to reproduce the prosperous scene of grain transporting in ancient times.

Photos provided by Shichahai Tourism Development Company



endar as a time when life begins to grow.

The oar boats, whose models were the boats in the painting *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*, set off in a straight line. Veteran boatmen sang while musicians played Chinese folk songs. Ancient banners and flags flapped in the wind.

"The sailing ceremony is held to pray for boating safely," said Sun Lu, manager of Shichahai Boats. "In the future it'll become a recurring event in Shichahai."

The boats are expected to operate until late October.

Most of the boatmen are from Shanxi Province, where they have lots of experience boating down the province's rivers. They trained for a month, learning chants and songs and facts about the waterway.

There are currently 28 boats available, including wooden boats, open-top boats and small luxury boats. The smallest boat can seat 10 people.

While aboard

A boatman will shout "kai-chuanlou!" (set sail!) and off you'll go.

The boats are all spacious, with the painting *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* most likely visible somewhere on the boat. Your destination will be the island in the middle of the lake.

Safety is of primary concern. On windy days, the boats won't sail. "When we see white foam on the lake's waves, it means the wind is too heavy for boating," one boatman said.

On the east bank of Houhai is a large stone tablet with the inscription "Jishuitan Harbor of Beijing-Hangzhou Canal," pointing out the amazing fact that this canal – the longest man-made waterway in the world – connected two cities that were separated by approximately 1,100 kilometers.

This year, more than 20 oar boats were set on the lake to recreate the scene of grain boats making shipments. Boatmen chat and folk musicians perform, adding a wondrous element to a bar district you only thought you knew.

Set sail from Grain Rain

Shichahai held a sailing ceremony on April 20 called Guyu, or Grain Rain – a date marked on the Chinese traditional cal-



Shichahai was once an important dock during the Yuan Dynasty.



Visitors can enjoy folk performance on the boats.

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If you'd like to listen to music, just ask. A performer – many of them are students majoring in Chinese folk music – will play an instrument such as the *guzheng*, the Chinese zither. They will play famous songs such as "High Mountains and Flowing Water" and "Song from the Fishing Boat at Dusk." You can also ask them to play classical songs or pop songs. The price is 100 yuan for an hour.

The boats run until midnight, which means you can get the unique experience of boating via lantern light. At night, the air is tranquil on the water, and very cool. In the middle of the lake is a unique place to experience the runoff lights and bustle of the bar streets around Houhai.

Parties, weddings and other events can be organized. Watching the moon during Mid-Autumn Festival on a boat could be a great experience, or witness floating river lanterns during Ghost Festival. Boats will be decorated according to the season.

Lanterns can be floated on the lake for 15 to 25 yuan. Don't worry, someone eventually fetches them out – the lake, after all, must be kept clean.

More services coming up

Presently, the boats go from River Romance dock in the east to Water Family dock on the opposite shore. Next year, a ferry will be installed.

"It'll be another choice for visitors. Currently, they can hire a tricycle or walk around the water, but in the future they can take a boat," Liu Xia, a person in charge, said.

The ferry will cost about 10 to 20 yuan to take once it is operational.

The plan is also to have more activities centered around the ancient grain trade, including boat-building and route-planning.

River Romance Dock

Where: Shichahai East Bank,

Xicheng District

Open: 9 am – midnight

Tel: 6612 5717

Getting there: Take Bus 13, 42, 107, 111, 118, 204, 612, 701, 810 or 823 to Beihai Beimen.

Cost per boat per hour:

200 yuan for open boat, 300 yuan for wooden boat, 500 yuan for luxury cruise

Other costs:

Folk music performance: 100 yuan per hour

Snacks are served at 20 to 25 yuan, beer at 15 to 25 yuan, as well as water and tea

Places of interest around Shichahai Former Residence of Songqingling

The residence was a garden of Qing Dynasty's Prince Chun. It's elegantly laid out, with rocks, ponds and cypresses. Pictures, letters and historical documents showing the life of Song Qingling, the wife of the revolutionary statesman Sun Yat-sen, are on display.

Where: 46 Houhai Bei Yan, Xicheng District

Open: 9 am – 5:30 pm

Tel: 6404 4205

Admission: 20 yuan, 5 yuan for students

Getting there: Take Bus 5 or 210 to Guozishi.

Prince Gong's Garden

This is a unique Qing Dynasty garden – one of the best preserved – located in the northwest of Shichahai. There is a typical courtyard here with an exquisite garden with pavilions and corridors.

Where: 17 Qianhai Xi Jie, Xicheng District

Open: 7:30 am – 4:30 pm

Tel: 6616 8149

Admission: 40 yuan, 20 yuan for students

Getting there: Take Bus 13, 42, 107, 111, 118, 204, 612, 701, 810 or 823 to Beihai Beimen.



Prince Gong's Garden

CFP Photo



Former Residence of Madame Song Ching-ling

CFP Photo



Boatman's chant

Dining



Authentic Cantonese rice dumplings

Dumplings are a sign that the Dragon Boat Festival is upon us.

To celebrate, Grand Millennium Beijing Yao Chi Chinese Restaurant is offering traditional rice dumplings through June 6. The dumplings are soft, smooth and moist, but never oily — perfect for enjoying with friends and family!

Where: Grand Millennium Hotel, Beijing, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: May 16 — June 6

Tel: 15699718760

Salad bar buffet

Come relax and enjoy a lunch of fresh vegetables, fruits, salad dressings and soups at Dynasty Plaza.

Create, indulge and enjoy!

Where: Sunworld Dynasty Hotel, Beijing, 50 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: daily, 11:30 am — 2 pm

Cost: 39 yuan per person

Tel: 5816 8888 ext. 8298



All you can eat dim sum

Indulge in authentic Cantonese dim sum prepared by the Grand Millennium's Hong Kong Master Chef. Select from more than 60 of the small dishes.

Signature menu items include Steamed Prawn Dumpling with Crab Roe, Steamed Prawn Siew Mai and so much more. The buffet costs 156 yuan per person — add 26 yuan for the soup of the day.

Where: Grand Millennium Hotel, Beijing, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chao-yang District

When: daily, 11:30 am — 2:30 pm

Tel: 6530 9383

Airlines



Singapore Airlines adds int'l publications to e-library

As part of its commitment to being an environmentally-friendly carrier, Singapore Airlines has announced the launch of *e-Magazines*, electronic international magazines available on its KrisWorld in-flight entertainment system. The new collection includes an additional 20 major magazine titles that offer customers wider access to quality reading materials.

Singapore Airlines will be the first airline to provide this feature on its Airbus A380 and Boeing 777-300ER fleets, which are outfitted with Panasonic eX2 in-flight entertainment system.

SilverKris, SIA's travel magazine; *KrisShop*, the Airline's in-flight sales catalog; and *KrisWorld*, SIA's in-flight entertainment guide, were the first publications to be featured as part of the trial in July 2010.

Beginning this month, the selection will be expanded to include international titles such as *The Economist*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Wall Street Journal Magazine*, *Prestige* and *Elle Magazine*.

Singapore Airlines said it plans to add more publications to the system later this year, including e-newspapers, e-books and more international and local magazines. The feature is scheduled to be expanded to its Airbus A330-300 and A340-500 fleets.

Hotel



STAY opens in Asia at Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing

STAY, a creation of French Chef Yannick Alléno, is opening its first Asia location at Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing in September.

Simple Table Alléno Yannick (STAY) aims to provide diners with a consummate dining experience by reinterpreting traditions and exploring French cuisine in a fun and interactive setting.

Chef Alléno is a prodigy at reinventing dishes. Having been named Chef of the Year 2008 while head chef of Le Meurice and received five Michelin stars for his restaurants in Paris, STAY reflects Alléno's passion for French food and playful nature. With a clever play on simple ingredients, Alléno turns French classics into refined dishes.

High-quality fresh produce is essential to every dish, resulting in a line-up of local produce. These beautiful and tasty dishes prove that, when cooking, less is more.

"Chinese cuisine is a tapestry of flavors, smells and tastes going back centuries. Using and adapting local produce into the menu and dishes will be an exciting challenge that I believe will be both fruitful and inspiring," Alléno said.

Jinling Hotels and Resorts bets on IDEaS pricing

IDEaS Revenue Solutions, a leading provider of pricing and revenue management software, services and consulting, announced that the company is working with Jinling Hotels & Resorts to deliver a holistic approach to pricing and revenue management.

Jinling Hotels & Resorts is distinguished by more than 20 years of experience managing luxury hotels. It has overcome fierce competition to develop its name in the hospitality industry through creative management ideas. Jinling Hotels & Resorts presently manages 82 luxury hotels and resorts and 12 of Jin's inns located all over China.

As part of an overhaul of its pricing, Jinling Hotels & Resorts selected IDEaS to analyze its data and determine the correct pricing for available capacity based on market conditions and competitor performance.

Through its initial program with IDEaS, Jinling will be applying revenue management technology to the group's flagship property: Jinling Hotel Nanjing. The project will combine IDEaS Revenue Management System with off-site support to ensure staff follows the progressive, revenue-driven culture and achieve tangible results both in the short and long term.



Your own fairy tale chapel wedding

Make your wedding dreams come true at Beijing's biggest glass roof hotel chapel. The 520-square-meter chapel has a modern, European design that makes you the center of attention. The opening special is 388 yuan (plus 15 percent gratuity) per person for bookings made through June 15. Chapel rental fees are waived during this offer.

We also offer the Crowne Ballroom's glass-roofed foyer that can be customized into space for every type of wedding, including small 100-person gathering or lavish 1,000-person affairs. Crowne Plaza Beijing Chaoyang U-Town is the most distinctive and elegant venue for your wedding.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Chaoyang U-Town, 3 Sanfeng North Area, Chaoyang District
Tel: 5909 6688 ext. 3815

Email: fenny.wang@cpbjutown.com

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Li Zhixin at lizhixin@ynet.com.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

'On the couch'

By Yao Weijie

In China, more and more young people are becoming slouches in the worst way, neither pursuing higher education nor trying to find a job, but just living off their parents.

Ma Jingling, a classmate of mine who graduated from college four years ago, belongs to this sad group.

After receiving his undergraduate diploma, Ma was determined to take the Graduate Entrance Examination (GEE). He asked his parents for money to prepare for the test. But instead of studying, he played online games — he was addicted — and failed the exam when it came around.

He went through the process again, and again his gaming addiction overrode all else. He wasted his time, energy and parents' money.

After the second failure, his parents asked him to find practical work. Ma realized he couldn't bum off his parents any longer, so he turned his attention to job-hunting.

He was too accustomed to the idle life, and the prospect of a 9-to-5 job was repulsive. He also lacked work experience and professional skills. Needless to say, employers weren't chomping at the bit to hire a gaming addict who hadn't ever been gainfully employed. So Ma wasted more time loitering around home.

Frustrated, he turned to his games more often. He was extremely unhappy and suffered health problems. He slept poorly and began losing his hair.

Last Saturday, his alma mater, Beijing Union University, invited alumni back to campus for a seminar about post-college life. It was there that Ma had a conversation with an American student named Jack.

Ma poured his heart out. "What should I do? I've lived off my family for



four years, but I can't earn a penny. I feel inferior. My health is broken down. Who can help me?"

"Don't be silly," Jack told him. "Everything is going to be all right. You should keep your feet on the ground instead of your head in the sky."

"Your health is the most important thing. If you spend a couple months on the couch, you would be better."

Ma was taken aback. "On the couch? Are you sure? I've been on the couch every day, watching TV and playing games, even sleeping. I used to love the

couch, but I can't stand it out."

Jack laughed. "Not that kind of couch."

"A sofa?"

"No, the expression means to see a psychologist."

"So you mean I have psychological problems?"

"Exactly!"

Ma pondered this, turning the idea over in his head. "Do you know doctors in this field?" he finally asked.

"Yes," Jack said. "I can introduce my psychologist to you."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to lizhixin@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Bank Services

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

It's a man's world. I have always suspected it; is this proof? It has only been within recent years that women have gained somewhat of an equal standing with men. Is this sign proof that we ladies still have a ways to go?

It doesn't matter which bank it is and it doesn't matter which branch either. Banks, and any money-related activities, have traditionally been a man's realm. In fact, there are still many, many places in the world where women are forbidden to open a bank account, or she's "allowed" but needs her father, husband or brother's permission to do so.

Luckily, this bank branch offers individual service and assumes that includes women. If a person is working, the banking hours aren't great, but you can go in on your lunch break or on



"Saturday." I assume this is a portmanteau of "Saturday" and "statutory holiday," so you'll have to check the holiday schedule.

"To Male Service," however, closes for lunch. It is also closed Saturday, and probably Saturday for that matter. Now, does the "to" indicate that only male tellers are available to serve you? Or it should read "for" and is intended for male clients only?

Indeed, *dui* (the first character) means "for, to" and *yewu* (the last two characters) mean "service." Even *gong* means "male," as in *gongji* (a male chicken, called a rooster). However, in this case it should read "business" instead.

These are really the bank's hours for working with businesses, not a demonstration of a patriarchal male-dominated culture. We can find signs of that elsewhere, both here and abroad.

1. The director could scarce hide his enthusiasm for the art.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZSD): At first glance, you may think that "scarce" is wrongly used. You may think it should be "scarcely." You would be right. "Scarce" is an adjective, as in: Good fruits are scarce. However, if you look into the dictionary, "scarce" can also serve as adverb. But there is a condition: it is colloquial. So, in standard academic writing, you still should stick to "scarcely" as the adverb: The director could scarcely hide his enthusiasm for the art.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): Another colloquialism I found in my homework recently is: The movie was "seriously long." It would be better to say "unnecessarily long."

2. Love and hate

ZSD: This is a similar case. Normally we will say "hatred," which is the noun: love and hatred. However, modern English now permits the usage of hate as a noun. In some English dictionaries, you still cannot find the entry of hate as a noun, and in some others you can.

TBZ: It is so difficult to keep a dictionary up-to-date with a living and changing language. Try to pay attention to what is being said in your favorite English movies or sitcoms to keep up with the times.

3. The Italian director's latest annotations of Puccini's Tosca

ZSD: I think the word "annotations" is wrong here. We know "annotation" mean notes for passages, terms or allusions. For instance, we have the annotations of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, for it is a very difficult novel for an ordinary reader. But this is not the case with *Tosca*, a ballet, and it is not the responsibility of a director with a dance. Interpretation is the correct word. The director has the right to interpret a dance in his own way. So it should be: The Italian director's latest interpretations of Puccini's *Tosca*.

TBZ: Correct. Again, knowing the difference comes from first learning the words, and second from listening, reading and paying attention to how they are used in everyday situations.

4. This makes reading it feel like a late-night chat with an old friend.

ZSD: I think the word "feel" is not redundant and therefore not necessary in the sentence. Who feels? There is indeed such a pattern: It feels smooth. We may say, Reading it feels like a late-night chat with an old friend. But in this sentence structure, it will be simpler without the verb "feel." It is perfectly all right to say: This makes reading it like a late-night chat with an old friend.

TBZ: I like the first way of fixing it best: reading it feels ... and don't forget that "s" on the verb, so that it agrees with "it."

5. A hospital claims conjoined twin girls with a single body.

ZSD: This is an incorrect sentence. "Conjoined" is wrongly used in this case. It should be: A hospital claims conjoining twin girls with a single body, or, A hospital claims having conjoined twin girls with a single body.

TBZ: I'm still confused by the sentence. "Claims" makes it sound like the hospital wanted to join the twin girls together, but I am pretty sure that this isn't the case. I would have to read the sentence in context.

6. At 21 years of age

ZSD: We usually say: in the year; you will never say: at the year. It should be 21 years, or 21st year. Actually, the writer wishes to say: at the age of 21 years. That's the expression and that is the way to say things!

TBZ: I agree with Professor Zhu. Sometimes there is just a particular way to say something; this is one of them. Study hard! It will get easier as you go.



“Trivia sparkles in the river of memory.”

The flow of memory

A tribute to the history of the mundane



By He Jianwei

If a movie is a meal, Li Luo's *Rivers and My Father* serves only vegetarian fare.

Inspired by tales of his father's childhood, Li's low-budget film narrates the memory of a life with 75 minutes of black-and-white images. It explores how memory functions in people's lives and what it retains.

The film begins with the director speaking to a soon-to-be retiree at York University in Canada. The employee recalls how time flies: 2010, once a distant future, is fast approaching.

The camera then leaps to a rainy street in Wuhan, Hubei Province, where the overflowing puddles branch out to form small streams.

Throughout the film there are three recurring scenes: a woman in a flowery dress who takes a little boy by the hand and climbs the steps of the dock; a boy with a poker face who sits near the window of a boat, his broken right leg propped up on a chair; and another boy who follows two bigger kids through the shrubs.

The boy in the first scene is the director's grandfather, whose biological mother abandoned him at his grandparents' home. The boy in the second scene is the director's father, who moved their home from a small town to the provincial



"Hometown is not a geographical term for many living in China. The landscapes we remember are vanishing too quickly. Today, 'hometown' is becoming a term for describing time."

Photos provided by UCCA



Li Luo's father recalls when he broke his leg as a child.

city by boat after he broke the leg. The last scene is the journey of the director's father to a tower near the river with his two older brothers.

Li's idea for the film began with an email from his father, who at 60 was composing his memoirs of a childhood spent on the banks of the Yangtze River.

But Li found that his father's memories were overwhelmingly banal.

"For ordinary people, a moment in life lingers in memory

forever. They don't recall significant events in history – just personal experiences of how they lived in the past," Li said last Saturday at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art after screening the film.

His own memories support this theory.

In an office of the university, he watched a father help his daughter butter a slice of bread at lunch. Neither spoke during the meal.

Li can recall almost every

lunch spent with his father while he was in elementary school. His father would slip out of work every day around noon to cook for him. They ate silently, and sometimes his father helped him pick from each dish.

After 10 years spent abroad in Canada, Li knows well the pain of nostalgia. When he returned to China, he found that the landscape of his hometown of Wuhan had changed radically.

"Hometown is not a geographical term for many living in China," said Zhang Xianmin, a professor at Beijing Film Academy. "The landscapes we remember are vanishing too quickly. Today, 'hometown' is becoming a term for describing time."

Mixing documentary and fiction, Li recreates his father's memories. His grandfather's story took place in the 1920s and his father's from the 1960s to 1980s. The time change in the film is indicated only through subtle changes to scenery and a few text cues.

In his grandfather's story, skyscrapers and motor vehicles still appear on the screen. Ordinarily this would be an anachronism, but in Li's film the controversy is intentional.

"I kept these modern structures in the shots for two reasons. First, the past no longer exists in the present. Second, these old stories can be happening again in the present day," he said.

The film was a way for Li to communicate with his father. After showing him the film twice, his father sent him a long letter that pointed out numerous mistakes and offered some suggestions.

At the end of the film, he shows his father's letter and explains some of the questions.

"My dad focused on narration, but I wanted this film to be about emotion. I abandoned the traditional way we tell a story, so my scenes can't always be matched up directly to his narrated version of the events," Li said.

